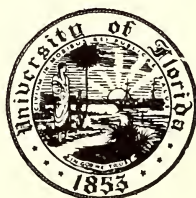





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JOHN MORLEY AND  
OTHER ESSAYS



# JOHN MORLEY AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY  
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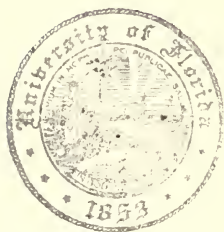
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THESE GLIMPSES OF GREAT MEN WHO HAVE  
LENT NOBILITY AND GRACE TO LIFE

I DEDICATE TO MY DEAR SON McLEAN

MAY HE FIND HERE

*deverticula amoena et requiem animo!*



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## PREFACE

Poetry, like Joy its native element, is "in widest commonalty spread." It is a pleasure to bid defiance to school definitions and to express unconstrainedly one's feeling that literature is as inclusive as life itself; that the vital quality in all literature is its poetry; that there is often as much poetry in an argument as in a sonnet; that criticism is valuable chiefly when it partakes of the essence of poetry, and that the life of a hero or a saint is as full of poetry as a play of Shakespeare. The author trusts that readers of the eight essays which compose this volume will take them as appreciations of poetry. For his own part he professes to have found poetry no less in the earnest reasoning of John Morley than in the musical subtleties of Michelangelo, no less in Balzac's high-flying adventure in prose than in Hugo's verse, and hardly less in Mr. Brownell's chivalrous determination to know and tell "invidious truths" than in Wordsworth's high resolve to point the way to beauty where other men did not expect to see it. And as for David Brainerd, it is astonishing that in America, where we have in general realized the need of discovering our national worthies and setting them up as examples to our level millions, his lonely and beautiful figure has been allowed to lie in the dust of oblivion. His life was a poem, full of divine madness, a heart-stirring epic of spiritual and physical adventure, a tragedy of poignant sorrow and triumphant pas-

sion. For his courage and enterprise as a frontiersman, he deserves to rank with Daniel Boone; for his awful wrestling with God, one has to seek a peer for him in Pascal.

The author desires to express his thanks to *The Atlantic Monthly* for permission to reprint the essays on John Morley (1911), The Fame of Victor Hugo (1902), and W. C. Brownwell (1910), and to *The Texas Review* for permission to use, with some alterations, the paper on Wordsworth at Blois (1916).

## JOHN MORLEY

In the author's humble opinion, the events of the last five and a half years have increased rather than diminished whatever value may attach to this essay, which was written in 1911. While the catastrophe of an almost universal war, a catastrophe that fell perhaps more unexpectedly in England than elsewhere, has postponed the fulfillment of some predictions therein put forth, the course of events has hastened the fulfillment of others, and, what is more important, has exemplified the principle which lay behind all these mere specifications, namely the insufficiency of either traditional conservatism or halfway liberalism to safeguard the welfare of mankind. John Morley is and always has been more than a halfway liberal. The fact that the integrity of the British Empire was preserved during the war, that South Africa remained loyal, that India remained loyal, must be accredited to him as much as to any other man. If his advice had been more promptly followed, the Catholic Irish, too, would have had no shadow of excuse for disloyalty. One of the most disheartening results of the war, which we all must feel and lament, is loss of faith in ideals which we once held with a firmness that we imagined no untoward events could affect. Our firmness has in many respects been shaken, it is true, and many concessions have had to be made to the logic of facts. Nevertheless, it would be short-sighted to infer that the series of facts upon which political judgment may be formed has been interrupted, or even that the climax of such facts was reached in the tremendous occurrences of the last five and a half years. Surely no one who has studied Lord Morley's life and writings can imagine that he, however disappointed

in his hopes of peace and general progress, has felt obliged by the logic of events to modify his belief in any of the ethical or political principles attributed to him in the following essay.

In the very first days of the war, before the full enormity of Germany's aggression had been displayed, and when there was a lingering suspicion that hostilities might have been averted by a more open handling of the diplomatic situation, Lord Morley, with Mr. John Burns and Sir Charles Trevelyan, saw fit to resign from the ministry. It was the general impression that they were induced to take the step by one or both of two considerations: first, that the conduct of any war, no matter how inevitable, would have been too strikingly inconsistent with their principles and public records; and second, that they had previously opposed the military convention between Britain and France and were unwilling to share the responsibility for its consequences. It is a tribute to the high reputation these gentlemen enjoyed that even in the danger and excitement of the war they were never, in any serious quarter, charged with other than pure motives for this action. Lord Morley is as greatly honored to-day as he was six years ago, and it has been a pleasure to note that not even party passion broke the general chorus of approval when he was announced as one of the beneficiaries under Mr. Carnegie's will. In any discussion of Lord Morley's withdrawal from public life it should be remembered that in 1914 he was seventy-six years old and may well have felt that his age rendered it unwise for him to share the toil of a war ministry.

It may be interesting to know that Lord Morley, in a letter written to the author in 1911, stated that his reason for accepting a peerage was that, having done for the cause of Indian reform all that he could accomplish as a Commoner, it was necessary for him to enter the House of Lords in order to finish the task.

THE LIBERAL CABINET which, with some changes of personnel but no deviation in policy, has governed the British Empire since 1906, will probably fill a wider space in the chronicles of time than any other group of English statesmen since the days of Cromwell. Upon it has fallen the task of retrieving, in so far as possible, the losses in wealth, prestige, and morality occasioned by the Boer War; of resisting the panics, spontaneous or contrived, which have tended to an unnecessary development of the navy; of finding means to restore the land to the people and the people to the land; of saving the poor from unemployment and starvation; of attempting to set the national free-school system beyond the reach of sectarian interference, and to transfer the franchise from property to manhood; of defending free-trade against specious arguments drawn from the examples of Germany and the United States and unscrupulously repeated by a far from disinterested press; of guiding, without jealousy and without giving occasion for irritation or loss of loyalty, the rapid adolescence of great colonial nations; of destroying the veto power of the House of Lords, and of definitely planning home rule for Ireland.

Some of these achievements and efforts are in line with the old Liberal tradition of Cobden, Bright, and Gladstone; some foreshadow, it may be, a new Liberalism, based upon a conception of property which would have been as unacceptable to the early Victorian Liberals as to the Tories of their day. When Mr. Asquith formed his first cabinet the prediction was made that it could not hold together long, because of the incongruity between its extremes. It was said that conservative Liberals, sired and bred in the individualism of the Manchester school, could not work in harness with Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. John Burns. The radical side of the cabinet, like the radical wing of the coalition majority, was socialistic, and would therefore prove unmanageable. The Labor members might sit below the gangway and hold the balance of power, together with the Irish Nationalists, but

their views could not find practical expression in the cabinet without disrupting that intimate group.

Thus far—and it is already very far indeed—these predictions have not been fulfilled. The reason seems to be that the older and more conservative members of the cabinet are themselves much more advanced than was at first supposed. Mr. Asquith has shown himself not a whit less radical than Mr. Lloyd George, although of course it would be overstatement to say that he goes as far as Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald, whose influence in the coalition might be thought to deserve official standing.

There is one member of this famous ministry who illustrates in his person the evolution of old-fashioned Liberalism into its present form. Mr. John Morley, a disciple of Cobden and Mill, a friend of Gladstone, and a member of the House of Commons so far back as 1883, now Viscount Morley of Blackburn, and maintaining in the House of Lords an unflinching and joyful allegiance to the whole Liberal programme, is an epitome of progressive policy during the last fifty years. His views have changed less than the views of his party, because he entered public life from a very high level of Liberal theory. His associates have been overtaking him. He has had the satisfaction of seeing the ideals of his early manhood generally adopted, and to a considerable extent put into practice, by a triumphant majority. His ideals have mellowed, indeed, but have lost hardly any of their original distinctness. This is remarkable, not only because he is seventy-three years old, but because he has, in three positions, been subject to influences which tend to convert the most radical Liberals into Conservatives. He has twice been Chief Secretary for Ireland; yet he remains a home-ruler. He has been Secretary of State for India, wielding something like despotic powers over subject and alien races; yet he is an anti-imperialist. He is a lord; yet it was he who moved the adoption of the Parliament bill by the upper house.



Americans, as a rule, probably do not realize the thorough-going character of the new British Liberalism. We are surprised even by the fact that the older Liberalism came at length to tolerate its own radical adherents, such as Bradlaugh. No public man in the United States entertaining opinions so revolutionary as those of Lord Morley and expressing them so pointedly would be returned to Congress for twenty-five years. The principles of an English viscount would be too democratic for the countrymen of Lincoln. A professed believer in the doctrines of the French Revolution would be regarded as dangerous in the nation that Thomas Jefferson helped to found. Mr. Morley used to be denounced as an agnostic; he perhaps was and may still be an agnostic; yet constituencies in England, where questions of religion are also questions of politics, sent him repeatedly to Parliament.

The philosophical opinions of this great public man are of a piece with his conduct in the legislature and in office. They are, moreover, extremely simple and unified. Between the publication of his "*Voltaire*," in 1871, and the completion of his "*Life of Gladstone*," in 1903, they do not vary except in emphasis. They are essentially the principles of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, translated, through the medium of an English mind, into terms appropriate to an age which has seen many of the conjectures of rationalism confirmed by natural science and historical criticism.

Lord Morley is one of the most eminent biographers and reviewers in the English-speaking world. Other names are perhaps more frequently on our lips, but death could make no more noticeable breach in the ranks of living English writers than by robbing us of his presence. His services as editor of the English Men of Letters Series will be remembered, though it is not publicly known how much attention he gave to the details of that undertaking. His essays on Wordsworth, on Byron, on Carlyle, on Macaulay, on Emerson, on John Stuart Mill, on George Eliot, on Machiavelli,

on Guicciardini, are among the most solid and thoughtful critical reviews in our language. The history of English Liberalism is written in his lives of Cromwell, Walpole, Burke, Cobden, and Gladstone. The books with which he established his authority as a student of the eighteenth century and of the French *philosophes* are his "Voltaire," published in 1871, his "Rousseau," in two volumes, 1873, his "Diderot and the Encyclopædists," in two volumes, 1878, together with his "Burke," originally published in 1867 and again, much revised, in 1879, and his essays on Vauvenargues, Turgot, Condorcet, Robespierre, and Joseph de Maistre. Nineteen volumes, almost all very compactly written, would be enough, without any political activity, to free a man from the reproach of an idle life.

One alone of Lord Morley's books is not directly historical, the noble essay, "On Compromise." It is expressly theoretical. Yet it contains no characteristic ideas which, to a sympathetic and intelligent reader, are not perceptible in the lines or between the lines of the other books. It is the moral portrait of the author, and although drawn so long ago as 1874, it is still true in every feature to the prolific writer and active statesman who developed in later years.

One step in his long course that might possibly seem incongruous with his principles was the acceptance of a peerage. Yet Lord Morley has remained unfalteringly faithful to democratic principles. Not many peers of such quality would be required to overturn or transform the aristocracy. He has sometimes been reproached for the severity with which, in ruling India, he repressed sedition. But it was his duty to uphold the laws, and both humanity and common sense forbade any temporizing with tendencies that might have deluged India with blood and severed a connection which, however guilty its origins, is now almost certainly a blessing to three hundred million people. One of the net results of his Indian administration is that henceforth natives will be associated



with Englishmen in the legislative and administrative departments of the Indian government. He retired from this office of immense responsibility in 1910, having been raised to the peerage in 1908.

It must serve a useful purpose to set forth the personal opinions upon historical tendencies, chiefly religious and political, which constitute the philosophy of such a man. They have the tonic vigor, the fortifying sting, of the unperfumed and impartial sea. They brace the mind against comfortable sophistry. They are fatal to flabby growths of emotion expatiating in the semblance of reason.

A man need be no moralist to perceive that the time has come when many of the reactionary illusions which diverted the movement of thought in the nineteenth century, even while they imparted to the stream a transitory glow, must in all decency be given up. Our sentiments have lagged behind our intellectual perceptions. We cling, heart-sick at the sure intimation of change, to institutions of which we have long since perceived the imperfect origins and realized the impending doom. It is humiliating to be obliged to confess that men of clear vision a century and a half ago, not by any moral virtue in them other than their clearness and love of truth, not by any charm in them, but rather in spite of their many personal disfigurements, might have saved us and the three or four generations preceding us from frantic deviations and farcical struggles, if we and our fathers had not cried them down as "mere rationalists."

One need be no prophet to guess that the next stage in the evasive process will be an attempt to grip harder than ever the symbols, the terms, the authority, the emoluments, and the æsthetic apparatus of a religion of which the historical and psychological foundations have been sapped. We shall be implored, in the name of "the stability of society" and in the interest of "beauty," not to touch walls that totter and the ivy that clings to them. No blandishment is more suave,

scarce any pathos more poignant, than the appeal of decaying ordinances wherein a mighty spirit once dwelt. But if the spirit has enlarged its sphere, if it breathes through the unimprisoned air, if it floats abroad where the world's work is done, if it hangs

Brooding above the fierce confederate storm  
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore  
Within the walls of cities,

then not to follow it and live in its vitalizing touch is inexpiable treason.

Not force, but clearness, not profusion, but simplicity, are what the new age needs. The advocates of force and profusion are many, and by their very nature conspicuous. They proclaim on every hand the virtue of enthusiasm. Have faith! is their cry. Through some subtle connection, which it would be worth while for a psychologist to explain, they associate faith with fireworks, with the devil's fireworks known as navies and armies. As to the direction of all that energy which they adore, they give us no counsel, or none that is above the lowest elements of the commonplace.

Our age, on the other hand, sated with wealth and abounding in excessive force, ready to follow with faith and zeal the leadership of wise men and fools,—our age, one would think, needs direction. That it is a new age we are all conscious. The indescribable change has been felt in this country; it has been felt and acknowledged in Europe; it has announced itself with the crash of empires in Asia. The rights of man are beginning to reassert themselves, as contrasted with the rights of property. The solidarity of human interests is being recognized as never before. Constitutions and laws which seemed adequate for nations that were predominantly agricultural, and for evenly distributed peoples, are proving unfit to regulate industrial systems that reach from country to country, affecting the vital resources of all mankind, and unfit for the dense urban life of our time.

Only superficial thinkers imagine that these regenerating impulses can be either furthered or effectively opposed without an appeal to the deepest of all sanctions. Whether the old order is to be defended or attacked, the ultimate arguments must be founded on instincts so profound, so personal, and so historic, that they amount to nothing less august than religion. One of the commonest "evidences of Christianity" is the claim that it has made the old order possible and may yet serve to support it. And many men who feel that the old order is unjust invoke what they call pure or primitive Christian practice in favor of the changes they advocate.

On the other hand, rationalists, reattaching themselves to the philosophy of Locke and Hume, of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists, of Paine and Jefferson, of the German Aufklärung, of Godwin, of Comte, of Mill, leap free from this entanglement of Christianity with social problems, and declare that the pursuit of justice and mercy *is* religion. They repeat boldly after the ancient prophet this universal and simple creed: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

In this line stands John Morley. If it appear strange that, by virtue of his cabinet positions, a man who openly avows such principles should have had a share in the power to nominate bishops of the Anglican Church, this is not the oddest anomaly of the Establishment. It is surely a tribute to his impartiality that the once frequent attacks on him as an agnostic adviser of the Crown have almost ceased. He is by deliberate choice, and therefore probably by some original bias of his nature, a religious teacher. If he has opposed the popular form of religion it is not because he has undervalued the importance of faith. He too has had his convictions. He has not, however, like Froude and many another writer, irritatingly assumed that his own beliefs were the axioms of all enlightened thinking. This offense, and not

the looseness of statement for which he has been too severely blamed, is what really mars much of Froude's work. Huxley was not quite free from it, nor was Lecky. The author of "On Compromise," on the other hand, has spoken as one who knew he belonged to the minority. But he has always spoken boldly, and has fairly won the enviable title, "honest John Morley."

Lord Morley is not a Comtist, though evidently he accepts the negations of Positivism and some of its active doctrines. He appears to feel that the Religion of Humanity is adequate for moral support and guidance. To state that he is neither so methodical and precise nor so imaginative and constructive as Comte, is only to say that he is English and not French. His temperament is practical and moderate, inclining him to esteem simple and common-sense views and to disregard small inconsistencies, and even pretty big ones, in order to hold fast a few strong positions. He does not appear to be by instinct skeptical. Merely he shows no tendency to yield to the fascination of mystical natures. For this reason, he is, as a psychologist, far less rich in haunting sympathies and profound and delicate observations than Sainte-Beuve, for example. The play of religious and political forces in the region of practical intellect, not purely speculative or purely active intellect, but mediatory between literature and life, may be better observed, for the period between 1826 and 1869, in the life and works of the great French critic than anywhere else. For the preceding fifty years, Goethe performs the same office. For the period since Sainte-Beuve's death, one who would follow the course of the game might content himself with Matthew Arnold and Morley. The latter alone would not suffice. There is not enough poetry in him, nor enough breadth of feeling.

Morley begins almost precisely where Sainte-Beuve ended, with a sure grasp of several elementary principles; but apparently he has never entertained so many conflicting

emotional sympathies. After wandering well up the height of more than one slope of thought and aspiration, Sainte-Beuve found himself at last, weary and disillusioned, clinging to the rock of positive humanitarianism, with a distinct, though slight, trust in progress, but half-fainting with the perfumes from vanished gardens of more luxuriant faith. There is no flavor of regret in Lord Morley's writings, no tone of renouncement, above all, no sentimentality.

There is hardly a trace in him of sympathy with the great reactionary movements that enriched the imagination of Englishmen and Americans in the nineteenth century: the mediævalism of Sir Walter Scott, the metaphysical apologetics of Coleridge, Newman's narcotic plea for the surrender of private judgment, Carlyle's revolt against reforms which he thought merely hedonistic. These were all instinctive, temperamental impulses, originating in character and experience rather than in deliberate weighing of evidence. They made the imagination of our race more flexible, but they perhaps, in some important respects, enfeebled judgment. They amassed a gorgeous store of figure and color, of hope and fear, but it is questionable if they strengthened the walls of the treasure-house. They opened vapory vistas into the past, but it may be doubted if they helped to make present duty plainer and the future course more clear. The panic of reaction against the French Revolution, which was the psychological basis of all these movements and of several less illustrious ones, impeded and still impedes social progress, and has diminished by an immense amount the sum of human welfare. Corresponding movements in France were expressed in literature by Joseph de Maistre, Chateaubriand, Cousin, Guizot, and Hugo in his early manhood. They attracted and in turn repelled Sainte-Beuve, exciting his thought and determining its direction, until near the end of his life. He was never free and frank, never bold, direct, and measurably happy, until he turned his back on the phantom flood and



rejected the haunting fear that intuition might, after all, be the better part of reason, that Pascal and Bossuet, the Jansenist recluses and the Jesuit saints, orthodox Protestants and Catholics on their common ground of supernaturalism, might be nearer the truth than Montaigne, Bayle, and the Encyclopædists.

It was probably the influence of John Stuart Mill that freed Morley in early manhood from apprehensions of this sort. By reading Mill "On Liberty" and then immediately Morley "On Compromise," one can see the filiation, and incidentally receive plainer instruction in truth-telling than all the thundering pages of Carlyle afford. This short course on the duty of clear thinking and candid speech is urgently recommended as a *ductor dubitantium*. To many a tired doubter it offers peace. To many a person whose energies are wasting, unused, because his sensibilities entice him, while his reason forbids him, to enter the conventional and ancient paths of spiritual activity, it would reveal other and unbarred ways of practical expression, by showing how many and how beautiful are the religious obligations of truth. Lord Morley's writings are full of tributes to his austere master. They are, in their totality, a monument to that great man. On every appropriate occasion the reverent pupil pays to the memory of Mill acknowledgment of vast moral indebtedness. It is of Mill, whom he came to know intimately, that Morley wrote the tenderest pages in all his books. The same deep tones run through the works of both writers, the same respect for intellectual conviction in themselves and in others, the same sense that no man lives to himself alone, the same recognition that a considerate and sympathetic hearing should be given to fresh and untried opinions.

Mr. Morley entered Oxford when the influence of Newman had long passed its height. Mill had succeeded to the intellectual throne. An influence more immediate, and

not dissimilar, was exercised in Mr. Morley's own college, Lincoln, by the peculiar and somewhat awful personality of Mark Pattison.

As we have seen, his writings fall into three groups: his lives of English statesmen, his lives of French philosophers, and the unique book, "On Compromise." There are, besides, his essays on various men and women of letters, but these may nearly all be regarded as by-products of his studies in French rationalism and English liberalism, and belong in the first or the second of the two main groups accordingly.

The biographies of Englishmen are probably the less significant of the two series. There is not so much unity among the members, and the author makes less of an attempt to penetrate motives. Furthermore, Walpole, Cobden, and Gladstone are, of course, far less interesting personalities than Voltaire and Rousseau, and their respective times were humdrum in comparison with the momentous epoch of French history just before the Revolution. The "Burke," one of Lord Morley's most readable and artistically successful books, belongs in the French fully as much as in the English series. The "Walpole" contains a jarring note of forced apology for that statesman's faults. It is, moreover, a work of far less compass than any of the others. The "Oliver Cromwell," though of great value as a narrative, is hardly a successful portrait. It suffers, as all other lives of Cromwell must suffer, when compared with Carlyle's speaking picture. Lord Morley is no painter. He has few colors on his palette, and they are ready-mixed. Nor has he anything like Carlyle's matchless gift of power to show a man visibly and audibly moving about, full-bodied, amid the tumults or the quiet fields where he actually did move. Tacitus, Saint-Simon, Carlyle,—it is not for even the best biographers of our day to be set over against these re-makers of men and scenes. What Lord Morley's pages possess in the way of superiority even to Carlyle—and it is a strong advantage, surely—is the

sense they communicate that nothing is being cautiously withheld or purposely distorted, that the author is giving us the plain truth as he knows it. The plain truth about Cromwell, as anybody living knows it, has not enough consistency to form a satisfactory homogeneous portrait.

The "Cobden" and, even more the "Gladstone" lose in unity what they gain in fullness, being largely compilations of speeches and letters. Still, they are, for this reason, among the richest and truest of biographies. If they are not works of art in the highest sense, they are replete with fact and comment, holding as much of the truth as could be crammed into their many hundreds of pages. It is interesting to observe the new Liberalism emerging in the author, his way of looking back to Cobden as having been left behind at a stage already remote. Mentioning with approval certain bills to protect labor, he remarks complacently: "It cannot be seriously denied that Cobden was fully justified in describing the tendencies of this legislation as socialistic. It was an exertion of the power of the state in its strongest form, definitely limiting in the interest of the laborer the administration of capital." And after referring to what thirty years more of such legislation accomplished, between 1847 and 1877, he adds: "We find the rather amazing result that in the country where Socialism has been less talked about than any other country in Europe, its principles have been most extensively applied."

He points out that Cobden was hindered by his zeal for personal liberty from perceiving the need for equality, which is the crying need in all industrial countries. Upon a much later occasion, in his overwhelming review of Lecky's "Democracy and Liberty," 1896, he associates himself with Mill in a searching criticism of certain commonplaces which both the Conservative and the Liberal schools of political thought had always accepted without question:—

"He [Lecky] talks, for instance, of the sense of right and



wrong being the basis of respect for property and for the obligation of contract. This will never do. It begs the whole question. The Socialist believes that he can make an unanswerable case the other way, namely, for the proposition that the unsophisticated sense of right and wrong, so far from being the root of respect for property, is hostile to it and is at this moment shaking it to its foundation all over the modern world. . . . The classes, Mill observed, which the present system of society makes subordinate have little reason to put faith in any of the maxims which the same system of society may have established as principles."

The "Life of Gladstone" is a work of immense labor loyally bestowed upon a sympathetic theme. The personal reminiscences in which it abounds are one of the chief elements of its value. They throw light on many obscure points in recent history, such as Gordon's mission to Khartoum. The author modestly keeps himself in the background, but it is evident that for many years he was not only very intimate with Gladstone, but closely associated with him in politics as counselor and agent. The "Life" has done much to restore the reputation of Gladstone, or rather to revive it, after the inevitable reaction which followed his amazing popular triumphs.

But it is in another field that Lord Morley's authority is most generally recognized. He first became known to the public as a student of the philosophy which prepared the French Revolution, the philosophy of the Enlightenment. As a fighting man in a conflict that still rages, it is through these early works that he most directly affects opinion. He occupies high rank, with Arnold, Leslie Stephen, and Mr. Frederic Harrison, as a spiritual leader, as a medium of communication between England and France, especially as a defender of plain speaking.

That plain speech on the subject of religious conformity in its connection with progressive social life is necessary, few

would deny in the abstract; but in practice we are too much disposed to act as if liberty were a settled possession and bigotry forevermore powerless. Startling examples are not wanting, however, to prove that such a feeling of security is unfounded. The following extract from a widely circulated pamphlet may serve as an illustration:—

“To establish and make universal the principles of pure democracy is the object, whether consciously or unconsciously, of the great thought-movements of our era. . . . Not only is the Bible, with its peremptory assertion of supremacy and control over mankind, directly counter to the democratic movement, but it is now the *only* real obstacle to the complete independence of humanity.”

These are not the words of a free-thinker. They occur in a book which has been widely distributed with the professed purpose of promoting a world-wide revival of evangelical religion. Those who separate the Bible unnaturally from the rest of history and literature, and fail to perceive its emancipating spirit, are capable of believing such statements. And if they also happen to dislike and fear democracy they will cherish popular Christianity as a check upon what they consider to be the wayward, innovating impulses of humanity. They are the most determined foes of progress.

Of such a nature, and more oppressive only because it was more strongly intrenched in all the high places of church and state, was the power that Voltaire made it his life-work to destroy. And for his tenacity and self-sacrifice in performing so much of the task as any one man could, Morley honors him, in a book that is at once a biography, an essay, and a eulogy.

Voltaire was not an enemy of religion; neither is his admirer. “It cannot be too often repeated,” says the latter, “that the Christianity which Voltaire assailed was not that of the Sermon on the Mount, for there was not a man then alive more keenly sensible than he was of the gener-

ous humanity which is there enjoined with a force that so strangely touches the heart, nor one who was on the whole, in spite of constitutional infirmities and words which were far worse than his deeds, more ardent and persevering in its practice." Neither was Voltaire an enemy of social order. He valued highly the culture of the rigidly settled age in which he was born. "The epoch," says Morley, "was one of entire loyalty to itself and its ideas. Voltaire himself perceived and admired these traits to the full. The greatest of all overthrowers, he always understood that it is toward such ages as these, the too short ages of conviction and self-sufficiency, that our endeavor works. We fight that others may enjoy; and many generations struggle and debate, that one generation may hold something for proven."

It might be supposed that one great advantage of an age of faith would be that it enables men to shake off undue solicitude about religion and escape the obsession of theology. But this is paradox; the facts have not been so in history. The so-called ages of faith have been ages crushed and absorbed by theology. Voltaire no doubt felt the charm of the seventeenth-century ideal, but he perceived clearly enough that the central pillar of that wide-branched vault was authority. And the material of this pillar could not withstand his analysis. He realized without flinching that the arches must fall, for the pillar was rotten. He was not alone in this. His splendid and for some time unshared advantage was, however, that he saw the connection between oppressive government and the denial of reason. As Morley affirms, "The companionship between these two ideas of disrespect for the rights of man and disrespect for reason, or the highest distinction of man, has been an inseparable companionship. . . . To Voltaire, reason and humanity were but a single word, and love of truth and passion for justice but one emotion."

It is the keynote of his own character that Morley here strikes, or rather its grand chord, the harmony of two kindred

notes: an ardent devotion to the welfare of all mankind, and a clear, unqualified allegiance to the rational understanding. How much the world needs that these two principles should be boldly affirmed is only too apparent as we observe the power of comfort and wealth to make men scoff at equality and doubt the possibility of continual progress, inclining them to acquiesce blandly in all evils which do not touch them and to drop with a grim smile and a sigh of relief into the city of refuge maintained by mysticism.

The hostility to Voltaire, and to rationalism generally, proceeds very naturally from those, to quote Morley again, "who are apt to measure the merits of a philosopher by the strength of his sympathy with existing sources of comfort." And that a settled religious faith, a sacred bond between us and our fathers, a common ground of hope and activity with those we love and desire to help in our own generation, the object and subject of all art, the motive of all knowledge and all endeavor — that a settled religious faith must be a comfort, and more than a comfort, the glory and crown of life, Morley never denies. Neither, in fact, did Voltaire. The latter knew, fully as well as his enemies, that religion is the centre of the great wheel of human life, from which radiate all the supports and impulses that keep life in the track of progress. With no other philosophy than common sense, and scarcely more of scholarly equipment than many other well-read and experienced men possessed, he scrutinized the "supernatural evidences" of Christianity and found them startlingly inadequate to uphold its claims of dominion over conscience. His analysis, though audacious and often rancorous, was seldom, if ever, prompted by levity. His instruments were slight, but his purpose was earnest and his hand sure. He has done more to purify and simplify Christianity, to eliminate its imperfections, and bring its universal, permanent properties into credit and activity, than any man since Luther. Or, again, as Morley puts it, he has forced the defenders

of Christianity "to plead for the tolerance of rational men on the comparatively modest ground of social fitness."

But in thus estimating the validity of Christian doctrine we are exposed to a new danger, peculiar to our own era. We are now solicited by certain pleaders to neglect the promptings of rational understanding, not because they are contrary to an easy faith, but because they are unnecessary. Popular Christianity, they insinuatingly tell us, is workable. It is the best form of spiritual order which the ages have brought forth. It satisfies the cravings of the heart. It promotes a morality which is, on the whole, the best available. Its value is very high. Let us rest content with what is, so long as it is thus good and practicable, and not inquire too carefully into its origin or its essential nature. Even if reason should decide against Christianity,—and we do not assert that it might not,—we should still hold fast to it in practice. Let us retain the symbols, the historic spirit, the æsthetic satisfactions, the soul of goodness in things,—well, not evil of course, but questionable, if you please,—and turn a deaf ear to all disturbers of our peace. Let us not be so illiberal, so uncultured, so crude and harsh, so puritanical and philistine, as to listen any longer to mere reason. It would blight our sensibilities, narrow the luminous sphere of our emotions, make pale and wan the many-colored dome under which we dwell at ease, and, above all, render extremely awkward the task, already so difficult, of bringing up our children! This is the murmur, too gentle and droning to be called the cry, of many "Modernists." The ringing sentences of Morley fall like whips of wire upon those who sell such doves for sacrifice in the forecourt of the temple.

"The modern argument," he declares, "in favor of the supernatural origin of the Christian religion, drawn from its suitability to our needs and its divine response to our aspirations, must be admitted by every candid person resorting to it to be of exactly equal force in the mouth of a Mahometan



or a fire-worshipper or an astrolater. If you apply a subjective test of this kind, it must be as good for the sincere and satisfied votaries of one creed as it is for those of any other;" and again he speaks with scorn of "a fatal substitution of bland emotional complacency for robust cultivation of the reason, and firm reverence for its lessons as the highest that we can learn." These words were drawn from him by the sight of the followers of Newman chloroforming their tortured minds. They might be applied, with pungent restorative effect, to souls that feel the lure of a new and insidious suggestion of relief, like the fickle city in Dante's reproachful phrase,

somiigliante a quella inferma  
Che non può trovar posa in su le piume,  
Ma con dar volta suo dolore scherma.

Morley very properly emphasizes the fact that Rousseau represents the most important aspect of the Revolution, its social side, to which Burke signally failed to do justice. "The pith of the Revolution up to 1790," he declares, "was less the political constitution, of which Burke says so much, and so much that is true, than the social and economic transformation, of which he says so little." Rousseau formulated the central principle of the Revolution, which was, to simplify life. "This in a sense is at the bottom of all great religious and moral movements, and the Revolution emphatically belongs to the latter class." The impulse to disentangle life, to shake off intricacies, "is the mark of revolutionary generations, and it was the starting-point of all Rousseau's mental habits." In social relations it means equality, in literature and art a return to nature. It is fitting that Rousseau should be judged according to the measure in which he remained true to this grand principle. He did remain true to it, and this explains his immense hold on the minds of men engaged in the struggle. His many pitiable disqualifications for intellectual and moral leadership all counted for

nothing in comparison with the fact that he was sincere and tenacious in affirming the deep principle that animated the whole movement.

On this question of simplicity, which has begun again to agitate the world, Morley sounds no uncertain note: he is for the coming revolution, if it is to mean a just equality. "As against the theory that the existing way of sharing the laboriously acquired fruits and delights of the earth is a just representation and fair counterpart of natural inequalities among men in merit and capacity, the revolutionary theory is true, and the passionate revolutionary cry for equality of external chance most righteous and unanswerable." He goes on to deny, as sensible people must deny, that all men have the same capacity for serving the community, yet he does not comfort himself with the thought that our present arrangements are fair, and expresses the hope that "generations will come, to whom our system of distributing among a few the privileges and delights that are procured by the toil of the many, will seem just as wasteful, as morally hideous, and as scientifically indefensible as that older system which impoverished and depopulated empires in order that a despot or a caste might have no least wish ungratified for which the lives or the hard-won treasure of others could suffice."

He recognizes in Rousseau the contrary to much that gave him satisfaction in Voltaire. Yet some of Rousseau's aims were necessary correctives of the Voltairean tendencies. Voltaire and the other Encyclopædists "forgot that imagination is as active in man as his reason, and that a craving for mental peace may become much stronger than passion for demonstrated truth."

In his "Diderot and the Encyclopædists" he does not depart from the positions taken in his earlier volumes, nor add to the fundamental ideas therein expressed. Turgot and Condorcet are rendered in admiring terms. Wise and good men, fully accepting the revolutionary philosophy, but know-

ing the economic facts of their time and country, they kept steady where other men lost their balance. Turgot is Morley's great hero. But he is equally just to Joseph de Maistre, who detested the Revolution and labored to undo its work. This modest, duty-loving man is depicted in winning contrast to Holbach, Grimm, and Helvétius, who remain detestable despite all our author can do to proclaim their ultimate usefulness in advancing the cause of free thought. And quite as likely as not, they injured it, after all.

Morley's "Burke" is more delightful than any of his other books that deal with the Revolution, in which aphorisms and judgments too often hem the flow of narrative and argument. Its style is less exuberant. The author was evidently limited in regard to space, a restriction which would not have proved harmful in the other cases. He of course points out the unfortunate results of Burke's ignorance of the true cause of the French Revolution. If Burke had possessed half of Arthur Young's knowledge of economic conditions in France, he could hardly have taken the course he did. His natural love for ordered systems, "that worked by the accepted uses, opinions, beliefs, prejudices of a community," blinded him to the necessity of the revolt. When the timorous, the weak-minded, and the bigoted in England were aroused to the danger to which it was supposed that the conflagration in France exposed their country, "Burke gave them the key which enabled them to interpret the Revolution in harmony with their usual ideas and their temperament." For this it is hard to forgive him. They seized upon the least worthy parts of his "Reflections" with avidity, but were little affected by the large political philosophy which makes that work immortal.

No one who cares for human welfare and is not forbidden by his own religious or political philosophy to see any good whatever in the French Revolution, can read Morley's works on that convulsive effort of mind without feeling indignant at the all-too-common assumption that it failed, and deserved



to fail. Burke and Carlyle between them have unduly influenced opinion on this subject in the English-speaking world. The Terror and the usurpation of Napoleon will perhaps be seen some day in their true light, as aberrations and unfortunate incidents of a movement necessary, conscientiously planned, and on the whole beneficial. Even the famous code of law which replaced the old chaos of French custom has been mistakenly called the *Code Napoléon*. Let any one ask himself what would have been the history of modern Europe if France, which has in the long run remained faithful to the Revolution, had not led forlorn hopes and served as an example for the last hundred and twenty years. Of her claims to honor, no worthier vindication exists in our language than Morley's studies of the great critical movement.

His essay "On Compromise" is a work of extraordinary value. Not to have read it is to have missed a powerful stimulus to right living. It was published in 1874, and has been often reprinted. The author first disposes of the fallacy that error may possibly be useful. He then deals with the effects of immoral compromise in politics, which are always evil, though "in the positive endeavor to realize an opinion, to convert a theory into practice, it may be, and very often is, highly expedient to defer to the prejudices of the majority." But the spirit of politics has often intruded upon the sphere of private conduct, and particularly upon religious organizations. In the celebrated chapter on religious conformity, the author treats with clear-eyed precision the cases of conscience which emerge in the conflict between social opinion and personal conviction. Since heresy is no longer traced to depravity of heart, persons are not often put under much public pressure to conform to religious usages from which they inwardly dissent. Painful difficulties do sometimes arise, however, between husbands and wives and between children and parents. Is it ever the duty of a husband to conform in order to please

his wife? Should children carry obedience to parents, or filial gratitude, so far as to profess beliefs which they do not entertain? What course should be followed in bringing up children, when the parents differ, one being a believer, the other an unbeliever? The replies are not always trenchant, for some of the cases are very complex, but the discussion is straightforward and helpful. A simpler problem arises where both parents dissent from the popular creed. Here the most elementary morality forbids teaching what is believed to be false, and yet it is not fair to make children peculiar, or incline them to a priggish aloofness, or bring them up without a large part of the culture of mind and heart which is associated with Christianity.

Of the ministers of the church, Morley declares that they "vow almost before they have crossed the threshold of manhood that they will search no more. They virtually swear that they will to the end of their days believe what they believe then, before they have had time either to think, or to know the thoughts of others. They take oath, in other words, to lead mutilated lives. If they cannot keep this solemn promise, they have at least every inducement that ordinary human motives can supply to conceal their breach of it . . . Consider the seriousness of fastening up in these bonds some thousands of the most instructed and intelligent classes in the country, the very men who would otherwise be best fitted from position and opportunities for aiding a little in the long, difficult, and plainly inevitable work of transforming opinion."

He speaks of the expression, "lower and narrower forms of truth," as a "fine phrase for forms of falsehood." This is sound causuistry indeed. It is by the tacit acquiescence of enlightened opponents, he asserts, and by the dissimulation of timid unbelievers, that stupid men in power maintain pernicious creeds. And they are pernicious just because they are not true. There is keen satire in his remark that "resolute orthodoxy, *however prosperous it may seem among the un-*

*cultivated rich*, has lost its hold upon thought." He argues, quite in the spirit of Milton and the sternest Puritans of the seventeenth century, against "an hireling ministry," speaking hotly and perhaps intemperately of "the essential and profound immorality of the priestly profession—in all its forms, and no matter in connection with what church or what dogma—which makes a man's living depend on his abstaining from using his mind, or concealing the conclusions to which use of his mind has brought him."

That there is heat and passion in the essay, these extracts, perhaps with disproportionate emphasis, prove. On the whole, however, it is a temperate, philosophical discussion of the larger cases of conscience which arise among men and women bound together, as we all are, by ties of political and religious order.

Men do not crowd, with noisy acclamation, round a quiet speaker of truth who denies himself the specious advantages of emotional appeal and depends solely upon plain reason. But they do come at length to respect him. John Morley, believing that "the spiritual life of man needs direction quite as much as it needs impulse, and light quite as much as force," has stood patient, sober, tenacious of his ideals throughout a generation when the contrary doctrine was insistently taught.

## MICHELANGELO'S SONNETS

In its moments of greatness and freedom Italian literature has ever turned to the contemplation of one deep desire. Through the vast stretch of seven hundred years, it has been animated by one enduring purpose. To the mind of Italy, more than to the mind of any other country, has fallen the work of unfolding, analyzing, and testing the Catholic ideal.

Very different has been the accepted task of letters in other European countries. The most celebrated monument of Spanish literature is a place of refuge from the monotony and stress of religious thought. French literature, in its age of fulfillment, the age of La Fontaine and Molière, though this was also the age of Bossuet, Racine, and Pascal, only partly concerned itself with the problem. English literature has a broader basis and more distracted aims. German literature, almost wholly modern, has for more than one reason been exempted from this noble responsibility.

But from the glad hymn of Saint Francis to the simple and grave lines in which Leopardi utters his renunciation of the faith, the poets of Italy have, in general, been pre-occupied with one overmastering care. Not without effect, one might indeed suppose, would be the fact that Italy was the hostess of the Church, proud of her duty and jealous of her charge; nor without effect was her historic position as the heiress of pagan Rome. She early became conscious of the power and charm of two opposed elements in the life of every man and every race, the power and charm of this world, and the power and charm of a super-mundane conception, transcending time and space. To no other nation were these two ideals so vividly and insistently presented by the facts of its origin and by its opportunities. To no other Christian

people did the goodness, the greatness, and the joy of this present life so early and so brilliantly commend themselves; yet to no other people was acceptance of the offer so sternly forbidden by spiritual engagements. The favored daughter of the ancient Mediterranean civilization might crown her brows upon some festival with pagan wreaths, but only to despoil herself of every trophy the next day and hide with sack-cloth the shame of naked shoulders. She was lovely, and adorned with inherited culture; but as a votaress dedicated to the care of a Christian altar, she could regard herself only as afflicted with the unhappy dower of beauty.

The main task of Catholic philosophy has always been to determine the relations between these two ideals, to reconcile them where possible, and otherwise to make clear and to enforce the supremacy of spirit over flesh, of the Church over the world. Only a superficial or prejudiced student of history could imagine that the struggle ended with the Middle Ages. Perhaps one who had paid attention chiefly to the visual arts, a student of painting, sculpture, and architecture, might hold this view even after faithful and dispassionate observation; but it is an advantage of literature that it represents more completely than all other arts the spirit of a race; and the literature of Italy shows no break, in respect to its chief aim, from the eleventh century to the twentieth. Whatever the emphasis, the vicissitudes, the practical weakening of the Catholic ideal in all that time, it never lowered its formal demands, never—and this is the important point—compromised with its opponent on the question of theory.

To this day it is difficult for a Protestant to understand what a weight of implication is attached by an Italian Catholic to the phrase, "*lo spirito del mondo*." A compromise has been effected for Protestants. A motley throng of scruples, distinctions, hesitations, pudicities, have been swept out of the Protestant conscience altogether. Others remain in the comparatively uninfluential sphere of facultative manners, as



things permissible in morals, but of questionable taste. A few, which we call principles, have been raised to thrones of greater authority than they enjoy in Italy. On the whole, we find it hard to appreciate why so many of the best people of Latin race perceive danger in all voices of the world and motions of the flesh. To them the world seems very evil and the flesh unblessed. The world and the flesh are in alliance. To understand this enemy, to tame it, and to use it in the interest of other-worldliness, has always been the chief task of religion in Italy.

It is the glory of Italian poetry that it has faithfully transmitted the religious spirit of the country. It has thus been true to that definition of art, which at first looks so strangely narrow, but on closer study appears so profound, in the words of Tolstoi. This definition may be only a half-truth. But after all, is truth vouchsafed to man in any fuller proportion? Is it not by the apprehension of disquieting half-truths that criticism makes progress? I abridge and combine the statements of Tolstoi as follows: "Art, in its highest forms, is a human activity in which one man consciously, by external signs, communicates to other men feelings that flow from his religious perception."

The peculiar task of the Renaissance was to broaden the basis of intellectual life by reconciling Christianity with pagan culture. Few, however, were the thinkers who dared go far enough to make the attempt successful. The old foundation of Catholic theology was left as it had been, or even narrowed to suit the sterner demands of Protestantism. The superstructure of art and politics was extended over a larger area than it had formerly covered, but it hung above a void. Hence its insecurity, the unnaturalness, which, for example, inheres in the architecture of the Renaissance, and the astonishing detachment of sixteenth-century poetry, in England, France, and Italy, from any philosophical background.

More great Italian writers lived in the middle of that

period which we call the Renaissance than in any other time equally short; that is, they lived in the century and a half which by common consent fall neither too early nor too late for inclusion under this term. Between the death of Pulci, in 1487, and the death of Giordano Bruno, in 1600, the age was graced with the names of Boiardo, Poliziano, Machiavelli, Castiglione, Ariosto, Berni, Guicciardini, Vittoria Colonna, Michelangelo, Varchi, Cellini, Vasari, and Tasso. Some critics, of whom Burckhardt is a notable example, conceive of the Italian Renaissance as beginning in the fourteenth or even in the thirteenth century, and therefore include Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio among writers of the Renaissance. Of Petrarch we may indeed say that he was a precursor of the Renaissance and that his qualities of mind and his aspirations were such as would have made him perfectly at home in a later age than his own. Burckhardt tells us that Petrarch owned and kept with religious care a Greek "Homer," but a point worth remembering is that he was unable to read the book. Though he had the will, he had not the good fortune, to be a humanist in the full sense of the word.

Boccaccio, again, was mediaeval with respect to the material he used, which was necessarily small, and his religious outlook, which was, one might say, parochial. His acquaintance with classical literature was restricted to a few authors. There is not, behind his conception of society, that definite, contiguous background which their knowledge of antiquity gave as a permanent consciousness to men who were born a hundred and fifty years later. Where he uses the history and mythology of Greece and Rome, it is in disconnected patches, awkwardly related to the world he lived in. For the mediaeval world was comparatively self-developed, and was organized under the dominion of the only great spiritual ideal then widely acknowledged in Western Europe, the ideal of Catholic Christianity.

Much less justification can there be for acclaiming Dante

as a precursor of the Renaissance. It is true that he, like Petrarch, treasured and turned to account all the classical learning available. But let us not be deceived by the frequency of his classical allusions into thinking that his knowledge of classical literature was either extensive or historical. Direct access to the records of Greek culture was denied him, by the absence of texts and his ignorance of the language. He knew Aristotle through a Latin version of an Arabic translation. He had a conception of the Platonic philosophy, but in faintly reflected and strangely distorted guise. Homer and Greek myths he knew chiefly through Virgil and Ovid; the Greek tragic poets scarcely more than by repute. Much of Latin literature which we now possess had not yet been discovered in Dante's time. All that he possessed of the ancient knowledge he cherished, but he could only contemplate his treasure in separate vaults, each opened with a different and often an ill-fitting key. He did not own the master-key of a correct historical interpretation, which was supplied only long after his time. And so he toiled, in his enthusiastic hope of universality, to relate these fragments of wealth, these treasures of experience and art, to a purely Catholic theory of the world. He wrote the greatest single poem ever created, inaptly called, though not by him, the "Divine Comedy." But it does not transcend, and he never dreamed that it should transcend, the Catholic ideal. It embraces so much as he knew of classical culture; but that it comprehends the life of antiquity cannot be maintained. It is a vision of eternity; yet solidly based on scholastic philosophy, a traditional interpretation of the Christian scriptures, and a close view of the social environment in which the poet was born. Its very perfection, its completeness, its marvellous adjustment of all things knowable, were possible only in that closed mediaeval world. Never again would it be possible for a single poet to wind through the abysses of earth, to touch the great horizon of thought and experience at every point, to draw out leviathan



with a hook, to bind the sweet influences of Pleiades and loose the bands of Orion. Never again would the world of knowledge be so small that even a Dante could squeeze into one-hundred short cantos the essence of all European history, all science, and all Christian theology. If only by a Dante, we may affirm also that only in the Middle Ages could astronomy, biology, physics, metaphysics, logic, jurisprudence, and both pagan and Christian mythology be thus brought together into harmonious union. As a theory of life the Catholic ideal had no living rival in Europe. Dante gave expression to this ideal when it was in a state of full vitality, triumphantly holding the entire field of speculative thought and carrying on, without much interference, its eternal warfare against the world.

A hundred years after the death of Petrarch was born Ariosto, and within a few months Michelangelo was born too, just a century after the death of Boccaccio. When these two gifted natures began to enrich the world with the works of their genius, let us say about 1493, Dante had been dead a hundred and seventy years. The opportunity for which Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio yearned had come at last. Through the fall of Constantinople and the migration of her Greek scholars, through happy discoveries and patient toil, the literature of antiquity had been, in large measure, brought to light again. Deference to ancient authority was, no less now than before, the guiding principle, but whereas the authority then had been sadly incomplete, it was now abundant. There had been a Renaissance, a revival of intellectual life; Ariosto and Michelangelo were enjoying its benefits. It was partly due to geographical discoveries, the doubling of the Cape of Good Hope and the success of Columbus, and to the invention of printing. But mainly it was due to humanism, a broader knowledge of Latin literature and the dazzling vision of Greek culture,—Greek science, Greek politics, Greek philosophy, Greek letters.

The first effect of humanism was to make men more de-

pendent on authority, rather than less. The disposition to cling was not weakened, but rather strengthened, by the perception of larger traditional support. Humanity in all ages, only too readily defers to the judgment of the past. Let us not be too quick to accept the statement, made in one form or another by nearly all writers on the Renaissance, that it was essentially a liberalizing movement, a freeing of men's faculties. It began by encouraging imitation, by re-enforcing the old fatal habit of bowing before the authority of a dead and glorified past. Men fabled of a golden age. It was seldom the age to come, but almost always a legendary age, as remote as possible, and even prior to the dawn of authentic history. In so far as the Renaissance is definable as a revival of learning or a rebirth of humane letters, it does not differ essentially from the Middle Ages, except in this respect, that there was, during the Renaissance, an enlargement of opportunity to imitate the best ancient models. In many ways the literature of the Renaissance is less original, less vigorous, than the literature of the Middle Ages. The practice of making classical allusions and of adopting the poetical and rhetorical devices of the ancients grew to be a danger and a nuisance. Fresh conquests in human progress are not won by deferring to the authority of the written word, no matter when or where uttered.

A few of the more penetrating minds, however, soon went beyond the stage of imitation and began to make a truly original and fruitful use of what they knew. They perceived through Greek literature the splendid civilization of which it was the countenance. This was a pre-Christian civilization. It could no longer be interpreted in terms of Christian history, as a mere side-light thrown upon the Catholic ideal. Dante had so regarded it; but men of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had to admit that the Greek ideal, whatever it was, differed essentially from the Catholic ideal and yet was neither damnable nor unimportant. With these consid-

erations began the second phase of the Renaissance, which was critical. In Italy it is represented by Giordano Bruno, in France by Rabelais and Montaigne, in England by Francis Bacon, in Europe at large by Erasmus. It had much to do with the Reformation, and out of it grew at last the eighteenth century, the French Revolution, and the modern spirit.

Born at the very height of the Renaissance, when it had just entered this second, and, I think, more admirable phase, Ariosto and Michelangelo profited no doubt by the revival of Greek learning. The benefit in Michelangelo's case was, however, only indirect; he did not read Greek, but drew intellectual sustenance from the air he breathed; and he was preceded and surrounded by a multitude of accurate scholars. For him a hint of greatness was enough. He caught, through affinity, the largeness and gravity of the Greek spirit. These two most illustrious poets of the Italian Renaissance were no doubt thrilled by a breath from the great past; but they were too independent to rest content with imitation or submit without good cause to authority. Ariosto can hardly be said to have portrayed the Catholic ideal, and his criticism of it lacks depth and substance. Fluent, exuberant, versatile, an accomplished and ingenious artist, he had not the awe-compelling power of his great contemporary, a power which shows itself as unmistakably, though perhaps not as copiously, in Michelangelo's verse as in his marble. Michelangelo is the only poet of the Italian Renaissance who can sustain comparison with Dante for that union of intellectual scope with serious-mindedness which marks a character supremely great. And his poetry distinctly *is* a criticism, or trial, of the Catholic ideal. The result of the test is that he abstracts from the artificial and impure complexities of theology a faith of his own, as grandly simple as any of his sculptured figures. Though slight in mere quantity, his poetry has inestimable weight.

I have been struck by what seems to me a curious impro-

priety of style in Walter Pater, who was so fond of dulcet sounds that in the first seven pages of his essay on Michelangelo he uses the words "lovely," "sweet," "comely," "grace," and their compounds nineteen times. One would have expected meditation on the austere soul of Michelangelo to suggest words of a very different import. Pater, moreover, was betrayed not only by his musical feeling; he took, I believe, a too exclusively æsthetic view of the Renaissance; he was determined at all hazards to see in it what was exquisite, refined and delicate. He was blind to the rugged virtues and equally strong vices of the time.

The lasting estimate that men make of art is of course not much determined by its quantity. The "*Orlando Furioso*" is a very long poem, one of the longest in the world, to say nothing of Ariosto's other works. From Michelangelo we have received scarcely more than three thousand lines, many of them unfinished. The "*Orlando Furioso*" had, for more than two centuries, a very considerable effect on European literature. Michelangelo's sonnets, for various reasons, have awakened few echoes until recently. Ariosto's poetry is full of joy. But it would be a false inference to conclude from this that it reflects the temper of a joyous age. For the life that it depicts is not the life of the age that gave it birth. It is, on the contrary, an artificial life, a life purely fanciful, based as little as possible upon the events and the vital feeling of the race or even of the social class to which the poet belonged. It is even less closely related to sixteenth-century Italy than Tennyson's "*Idylls of the King*" are related to Victorian England.

I sing the dames, the knights, the arms, the loves,  
The deeds of courtesy and bold emprise,  
That were in days of old, when crossed the Moors  
From Africa, and wrought such woe in France.

Le donne, i cavallier, l'arme, gli amori,  
Le cortesie, l'audaci imprese io canto,  
Che furo al tempo che passaro i Mori  
D'Africa il mar, e in Francia nocquer tanto—

Thus does he begin his interminable romance. The subject is unreal. The "bold emprises" had little or no historical foundation. It is curious that the supposed adventures of Roland and Oliver

And all who since, baptized or infidel,  
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,  
Damasco or Marocco or Trebizond,  
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore  
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell  
By Fontarabbia,—

it is curious that this purely legendary matter, French in its origin, and likely, one would have thought, to interest Italians less than Frenchmen, should have busied the pens, not only of Ariosto, but of Pulci, Boiardo, and Berni. And indeed the epic theme of Charlemagne and Roland was at length perverted by Italian writers into burlesque and mockery. For the Italian character is positive rather than romantic. It is not credulous. Its achievements have been largely the fruit of rational induction. It is shrewd, sceptical, disillusioned. Sentiment, pathos, and humor appeal to it less than to the Germanic races. Compared with the mystical character of the Celtic peoples, the Italian often appears hard or cynical.

The subject matter of "*Orlando Furioso*" was alien. Furthermore, it did not of itself invite serious treatment at that particular epoch of Italian culture. If there ever had been an age of Italian chivalry, the Italians of the sixteenth century were of all men the least likely to think so. Interesting, beautiful, melodious, endlessly varied as is the "*Orlando Furioso*," it falls far short of communicating the real feelings of the age, religious or otherwise. Rather did it offer—and here perhaps was one reason for its success—a retreat from the world of reality into a shimmering region of pure fancy.

For, indeed, those who speak of the joyousness of the Renaissance, its absorption in beauty, its freedom, have failed to study a sufficient range of facts. They have not taken



into account the danger, the terror, the oppression of the time. They have not realized that the substitution of absolutism for feudalism involved a thousand surrenders of ancient liberties and immunities; that the boasted emancipation of the individual meant the tyranny of a few super-men over defenceless and unorganized masses. It was an age of insane lusts and motiveless cruelty. In the delicious pages of Ariosto we hear neither the triumph of the world nor that small but unmistakable voice of the spirit, which in no age has been altogether silent. He will therefore not serve our purpose for one moment, if we are looking for a poet who in some measure stood to the Italian Renaissance as Dante stood to the Middle Ages.

Nor will Tasso serve. He came late in the sixteenth century, when the lively breath of the Renaissance was passing out of Italy into northern lands. The "*Gerusalemme Liberata*" is morally too good for the generation on whom it was bestowed. Tasso's was one of those natures which nothing can corrupt, because they hold themselves remote, through modesty or suspicion, inwardly sweet though bitter on the surface. But having lived in spiritual isolation, he does not, in his poetry, communicate the feelings of his people and his times. To a degenerate aristocracy, without faith or patriotism, he sang of the Crusades. And not even such a theme could make the song heroic. Its pious miracles have the childish air of Jesuit inventions; its military actions are the parade of toy-soldiers. A good English parallel is "*The Faerie Queene*." Very pale and faint beside Dante is this Tasso. Yet from Dante he has borrowed much of his technique. In Tasso we see also one of the minor tendencies of the Italian Renaissance which had previously not been very apparent, but which from his time to ours has been unpleasantly conspicuous in Italian letters. I mean that *morbidezza* or softness, that debilitating languor, from which scarcely any modern Italian poetry is free. The next step

downwards was the invention of grand opera. The "Gerusalemme Liberata," if one cared to insist upon its incongruities instead of praising its very obvious charm, might be described as a sweet epic poem. The combination of these terms does not suggest greatness. No; neither Ariosto nor Tasso represents the Italian Renaissance in any such way as Dante represents the Middle Ages.

Our attention is drawn rather to the handful of great verse left, unfinished and unprinted, by Michelangelo,—carelessly thrown, as it were, among his cast-off sketches; mere efforts to free his mind and look upon his own thoughts detached from the confusion of consciousness; studies, and deep studies, but not perfect works. Most of them were written when he was past seventy. Apparently regarding them either as unworthy of publication or as too precious for the eyes of the vulgar, he gave them out here and there among his friends. Vasari printed a few verses from them, and Benedetto Varchi, in 1546, made some extracts from one of the sonnets, in a lecture on Michelangelo before the Florentine Academy. Most of them, fortunately, were preserved in the archives of the Buonarroti family. At length, in 1623, fifty-nine years after the great man's death, his grand-nephew, Michelangelo the younger, collected all he could find and endeavored to edit them. "Here, however, began," says John Addington Symonds, "what we may call the tragedy of the Rifacimento. The more he studied his great ancestor's verses, the less he liked or dared to edit them unaltered. Some of them expressed thoughts or sentiments offensive to the Church. In some the Florentine patriot spoke over-boldly. Others exposed their author to misconstruction on the score of personal morality." And so, with pious intention, but false to the truth, he smoothed these rugged blocks, making them clear to himself and inoffensive to the powers.

Southey, Wordsworth, Longfellow, and others tried to translate some of the sonnets, but were dependent on this

impure source. Wordsworth confessed that the task was too hard for him. He wrote to a friend: "I mentioned Michelangelo's poetry some time ago; it is the most difficult to construe I ever met with, but just what you would expect from such a man, showing abundantly how conversant his soul was with great things. There is a mistake in the world concerning the Italian language; the poetry of Dante and Michelangelo proves that if there be little majesty and strength in Italian verse, the fault is in the authors, and not in the tongue. I can translate, and have translated two books of Ariosto, at the rate, nearly, of one hundred lines a day; but so much meaning has been put by Michelangelo into so little room, and that meaning sometimes so excellent in itself, that I found the difficulty in translating him insurmountable. I attempted at least fifteen of the sonnets, but could not anywhere succeed. I have sent you the only one I was able to finish; it is far from being the best, or most characteristic, but the others were too much for me."

Perhaps Wordsworth would have found the rude originals even less tractable than the dressed-up text which was the only one available in his day. They were written in defiance of grammar. But his opinion of Michelangelo's majestic strength would have been only enhanced by a study of his actual words. It was not till 1863 that the poems were faithfully edited, by Cesare Guasti. A few years afterwards they were translated into English verse by that accomplished man of letters, John Addington Symonds.

The depth and scope of Italian thought in the Middle Ages are adequately reflected in Dante. The only Italian poet of the Renaissance who can compare with him for greatness of soul is Michelangelo. What then though Michelangelo's poetry be small in quantity and hard to comprehend? If it is an authentic utterance of his mighty spirit, it is more likely to represent the serious feeling of the time than a dozen "Orlandos." These rough verses are the only Italian poetry, after Dante,



which is of the same order of greatness as his, until the mantle falls on Leopardi.

Dante, Michelangelo, Leopardi are the Italian poets who utter the deepest note, each in his own age; the first mediaeval, the second of the Renaissance, the third in modern times. The note grows less rich and full as we descend the centuries. In Dante it is re-enforced with overtones and undertones innumerable; in Leopardi it is pathetically thin. But it is the same note, deep, mournful, austere. It is a note of yearning for divine love, a cry for spiritual help against the allurements of sense and the world's deceptions. Reading Michelangelo and Leopardi after Dante—and they are the only Italian poets who will bear reading immediately after him—we perceive that the unity of the three ages is more remarkable than the diversity. Dante maintains, in its fulness, the Catholic ideal and celebrates its triumph in the wide field of human destiny. Michelangelo abstracts from the Catholic ideal just so much as is necessary for his own support and consolation. Leopardi ponders it, rejects it in form, and re-admits part of it in substance, under the guise of an agnostic stoicism. Dante touches and illumines the whole sphere of relations between faith and the world. Michelangelo grapples with the central problem only. Leopardi seems to reject both faith and the world. And now that his voice too is silent, it would appear, in the words of Sir Philip Sidney, that “an over-faint quietness should seem to strew the house for poets.”

Michelangelo's sonnets number seventy-seven in all and there are, besides, a few madrigals, canzoni, stanzas, epitaphs, and epigrams. One of these last is of profound significance, as showing the great master's weariness of the evil times in which he lived. It helps us understand those enigmatical figures of his on the tomb of the Medici, in the sacristy of San Lorenzo in Florence. Through contempt or fear he left that work unfinished. The republic of Florence had been

abolished. Tyranny, magnificent it is true, and enlightened, but none the less tyranny, had throttled the free life of the city. Throughout Italy wickedness was enthroned in high places, and at Rome in the highest place of all. Beside the sarcophagus in Michelangelo's famous composition, recline two statues, of Day and Night. Beneath the latter, a light-hearted admirer, alluding to the name Angelo, wrote four lines, which I venture to translate as follows:

Night, whom thou seest in this fair attitude  
Sleeping, was by an angel graven in stone,  
And, though asleep, she is with life imbued.  
Dost thou believe not? Wake her; she will speak.

The aged sculptor, deeming an eternal sleep preferable to a life without honor, replied in an epigram, of which we fortunately possess a translation from the hand of Wordsworth:

Grateful is Sleep, more grateful still to be  
Of marble; for while shameless wrong and woe  
Prevail, 'tis best to neither hear nor see.  
Then wake me not, I pray you. Hush, speak low.

Many of the sonnets were inspired by Michelangelo's love for Vittoria Colonna. He seems to have made her acquaintance in his sixty-third year, when she was in her forty-seventh. Born of the great house of Colonna, she had already been for eight years the widow of the Marquess of Pescara, a renowned soldier of fortune. She was celebrated for her beauty, her piety, her serious learning, and her gifts as a poet. In that age of unbridled passion, another quality that added not a little to her fame was her acknowledged purity of life. Michelangelo was the most illustrious of living artists. Popes and temporal despots had vied with one another to obtain and reward his services. Amid them all he had kept the jewel of his soul, his kingly independence. It was said of him that he braved Pope Julius II as the King of France would not have done. He had preserved, too, a childlike

simplicity. His manners were plain. He was pious, hard-working, and of a naturally kind disposition, though, when exasperated by deceit, he was terrible in his anger. Long acquaintance with some of the greatest and wickedest of mankind had begun to make him weary of the world and scornful of its honors. In early manhood a deep impression had been made on him by the preaching of Savonarola. Roman Catholic writers are probably justified in rejecting the suggestion that Michelangelo was tainted with Protestant heresy. They fail, however, in attempting to prove that Vittoria Colonna did not lay more stress on the doctrine of justification by faith than was compatible with orthodoxy. She was interested in the Protestant movement, though perhaps not implicated in it. One might safely say that the same process of criticism which produced an Erasmus, north of the Alps, and even a Luther, had begun to affect some of the noblest minds of Italy.

A distinct stage in every revolution is a longing for simplicity, a longing prompted by disgust with the complexities and artificialities, the injustice and absurdity, that accumulate around a successful system. The Catholic ideal had lost simplicity. Vittoria Colonna is the most conspicuous example, after Savonarola, of an Italian who perceived this with regret. Michelangelo loved her for her beauty, the comfort of her kindness, and above all for her character. Her spiritual insight confirmed his own. She too was weary of the world. She too was unable to accept those official methods of dealing with the world which the Church recommended. He would not accept the world; his conscience revolted, though he saw that the most eminent churchmen really did accept it. Neither could he embrace a purely ascetic life; the largeness of his nature forbade this, though he studied with keen interest the discipline of hermits. He might have fought out the battle in solitude and inconclusively, a lonely soul, distracted, baffled, embittered. But cheered by the society of such a

woman as Vittoria Colonna, animated by her example, refreshed by her hope, rewarded with her encouragement, he rose above despair.

Walter Pater appears to me to use singularly inapt terms when he says that in reading Michelangelo's poems we are spectators of "the struggle of a desolating passion, which yearns to be resigned and sweet and pensive, as Dante's was." Merely sweet and pensive Dante's passion was not, nor can Michelangelo's love for Vittoria Colonna be properly called "desolating."

The chief subjects of Michelangelo's sonnets are Beauty and Death. He looked upon life, and lo! it was good. Earth, sun, moon, and stars, their forms, their colors, and the laws that govern their motions were beautiful. Men and animals were beautiful. The best works of men were beautiful, and their best thoughts. He, Michelangelo, whose brain had conceived and whose hand had wrought so many brave inventions, could not deny this. Yet none of these things live forever. Their life is but a moment in the vast abyss of time, a flash in the limitless void of space. Is there not something that endures, that binds all things together, that gives continuance to beauty? Strange to say, the word that for most of us darkens the mystery gave forth light to Michelangelo. This word is Death. In Death he saw not the end of this world and all its beauty, but the possibility, nay the promise, of eternal life. From the decay of a flower or the withering of a lovely human face, he saw, in the words of a quaint old English poet, "bright shoots of everlastingness." Death is the door through which the Divine Artist re-admits to the fullness of His embrace those images of Beauty, Goodness, and Truth which came forth from Him as examples of His handiwork. In them we apprehend Him here below. Through Death we follow them into His presence.

Michelangelo was not the first man, any more than he was the last, to argue that, in the divine economy, beauty, good-

ness, and truth must be imperishable, and that Death must mean their revival in the bosom of God. As Mr. W. S. Lilly has pointed out in his thoughtful essay,\* "the leading ideas of Michael Angelo's poetry, often vaguely and obscurely expressed, may be found in Dante, writ large and duly formulated." Here again we have occasion to observe the unity of spirit that pervades the greatest Italian poetry, a unity too deep to be affected by the Zeit-geist. Whenever a poet ventures to express the hope, so natural to a poet, that the beauty of this world may after all be a promise rather than an illusion, it is customary to speak of his "Platonism." In the present instance I see no reason to infer that Michelangelo would not have thus ventured, even had he never heard of Plato; and quite agree with Mr. Lilly that "there is as much and as little reason for attributing Platonism to Michelangelo as to the most distinctly Christian of poets."

When his dear friend died, in 1547, after their spiritual communion had lasted ten years, he little realized that he should long survive her. He had thought of her as the consolation of his end. Her death confirmed his faith in Immortal Love. And for sixteen years more, his conversation was in heaven.

This, in brief, is the story of Michelangelo's sonnets. They are love-poetry, and of such a kind as might be inferred from the characters of the two lovers. But I have said that they interpret the Catholic ideal and apply it in a peculiar manner to the problem of how to exist in the world. They recognize the world and distinguish in it two elements, the one evil, the other divinely good and fair. For salvation from the evil they suggest no help from sacraments nor yet from works, but only the simplest faith in Christ. They do not advocate withdrawal from the world, but a brave endeavor to seek its divine essence.

The spirit of Michelangelo's poetry is grandly sad. His

\*"Michael Angelo—the Artist," in "Renaissance Types," 1901.



is no private grief, but the tragic sorrow of a soul that feels its greatness and its bounds. This mortal would put on immortality. As one reads the sonnets, so hard, so impentetrable at first, so abstract always, so lacking in references to known things, events, and persons, one at length is lifted from the historical, the concrete, the personal, to the contemplation of pure beauty and eternal love.

There have been and are millions of men and women, even in modern times, to whom religion means other-worldliness. To lives merely monastic, it was and is nothing else. To Dante, and to Michelangelo, it meant something more: the selection of an eternal element in this world, which through its affinity with the divine nature will survive death. The souls whose destinies are bound up with this element are saved. I cannot see that the great Italian poet of the Renaissance differed in this respect from the great Italian poet of the Middle Ages. He was, however, repelled by the excesses of overgrown and too grossly triumphant Catholicism into a reaction against what I make bold to call religious superfluities; his faith was simpler than Dante's; he approached God directly, not asking for sacramental or sacerdotal intervention.

But even Michelangelo did not arrive at the utmost possible simplification of belief. The third poet, Leopardi, unable to make the leap of faith, from the known to the unknown, unable to transmute a glorious hope into a happy affirmation, eliminated other-worldliness from his religion entirely. Who will deny that Leopardi communicates a religious feeling—negative, if you please, but yet a religious feeling—which is very common in our age, when he sadly, but calmly, sings:

Or poscrai per sempre,  
Stanco mio cor.

Rest now, forever rest, my weary heart.  
Gone is my last deception—  
That I believed myself eternal.  
'Tis gone. I feel that not alone the hope,  
But the desire's extinguished.  
Rest now forever.

Who can read "La Ginestra," his poem about the broom-corn that grew on the flanks of Vesuvius the Exterminator, and not admit that Leopardi is a religious poet? Religion has her terrors as well as her consolations, and the most terrible of all thoughts is: "In the grip of physical force, what does life avail, with all its goodness and beauty?" Unless we are to define religion by its results, and not by its inherent nature, this is a religious thought, even though purely negative.

Michelangelo's fiftieth sonnet, using Symonds's translation, shows us a touching picture of the grave old man comforting himself with the thought that if he had found his love sooner he might not have adored her so perfectly:

Had I but earlier known that from the eyes  
Of that bright soul that fires me like the sun  
I might have drawn new strength the race to run,  
Burning as burns the Phoenix ere it dies;  
Even as the stag or lynx or leopard flies  
To seek his pleasure and his pain to shun,  
Each word, each smile of her would I have won,  
Flying where now sad age all flight denies.  
Yet why complain? For even now I find  
In that glad angel's face, so full of rest,  
Health and content, heart's ease and peace of mind.  
Perchance I might have been less blest,  
Finding her sooner: if 'tis age alone  
That lets me soar with her to seek God's throne.

The fifty-second recalls to memory more than one poem of the English Renaissance, more than one sonnet of Shakespeare, Spenser's four Hymns in Honour of Love and Beauty, Heavenly Love and Heavenly Beauty, and, above all, the sonnet in which Sidney, remorseful at having written so much in praise of his Lady, tremblingly lays a new song at the feet of Love Divine. We see that not in Italy alone were there religious poets, and not in Italy alone did the two

ideals clash. In Michelangelo's sonnet we observe three thoughts interwoven: his love for his lady is above sensual passion; this kind of love raises the soul to heaven; death is the lover's friend:

I saw no mortal beauty with these eyes  
 When perfect peace in thy fair eyes I found;  
 But far within, where all is holy ground,  
 My soul felt Love, her comrade of the skies:  
 For she was born with God in Paradise;  
 Else should we still to transient loves be bound;  
 But finding these so false, we pass beyond  
 Unto the Love of Loves that never dies.  
 Nay, things that die cannot assuage that thirst  
 Of souls undying; nor Eternity  
 Serves time, where all must fade that flourisheth.  
 Sense is not Love, but lawlessness accurst:  
 This kills the soul, while our love lifts on high  
 Our friends on earth—higher in heaven through death.

Sir Philip Sidney's poem is much simpler and because of its directness appears more heartfelt:

Leave me, O love! which reachest but to dust;  
 And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things:  
 Grow rich in that which never taketh rust:  
 Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.  
 Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might  
 To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be,  
 Which breaks the cloud and opens forth the light  
 That doth both shine and give us light to see.  
 O take fast hold! let that light be thy guide,  
 In this small course which birth draws out to death,  
 And think how evil becometh him to slide  
 Who seeketh heaven and comes of heavenly breath.  
 Then farewell, world, thy uttermost I see;  
 Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.

Michelangelo's effort to reconcile the two ideals, the worldly and the other-worldly, is shown in sonnet LVII:



Swift through the eyes unto the heart within  
 All lovely forms that thrall our spirit stray;  
 So smooth and broad and open is the way  
 That thousands and not hundreds enter in  
 Of every age and sex: whence I begin,  
 Burdened with griefs, but more with dull dismay,  
 To fear; nor find mid all their bright array  
 One that with full content my heart may win.  
 If mortal beauty be the food of love,  
 It came not with the soul from heaven, and thus  
 That love itself must be a *mortal* fire.  
 But if love reach to nobler hopes above,  
 Thy love shall scorn me not nor *dread* desire  
 That seeks a carnal prey assailing us.

The sixtieth sonnet is so like one of Shakespeare's that we might be tempted to think our English poet had read it, were we not checked by remembering that Shakespeare's sonnets were printed in 1609, fourteen years before Michelangelo's:

Sometimes my love I dare to entertain  
 With soaring hope not over-credulous;  
 Since if all human loves were impious,  
 Unto what end did God the world ordain?  
 For loving thee what license is more plain  
 Than that I praise thereby the glorious  
 Source of all joys divine, that comfort us  
 In thee, and with chaste fires our soul sustain?  
 False hope belongs unto that hope alone  
 Which with declining beauty wanes and dies,  
 And, like the face it worships, fades away.  
 That hope is true which the pure heart hath known,  
 Which alters not with time or death's decay,  
 Yielding on earth earnest of Paradise.

Shakespeare's one hundred and sixteenth sonnet is like a development of the last five lines of the sonnet just read. It is as follows:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
 Admit impediments. Love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove:  
O, no! it is an ever fixed mark.  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come;  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

In the sixty-fifth sonnet, written after the death of Vittoria Colonna, Michelangelo, thinking his own departure at hand, makes the painful declaration that even the pure and exalted toils of his life, even painting and sculpture, which he had never degraded to a base use, were an impediment to his soul, which now turned to Christ alone:

Now hath my life across a stormy sea  
Like a frail bark reached that wide port where all  
Are bidden, ere the final reckoning fall  
Of good and evil for eternity.  
Now know I well how that fond phantasy  
Which made my soul the worshipper and thrall  
Of earthly art, is vain; how criminal  
Is that which all men seek unwillingly.  
Those amorous thoughts which were so lightly dressed,  
What are they when the double death is nigh?  
The one I know for sure, the other dread.  
Painting nor sculpture now can lull to rest  
My soul that turns to His great love on high,  
Whose arms to clasp us on the cross were spread.

How inward and profound is the religious feeling in the seventy-second! Beauty is still his theme, but regarded now as a danger to the soul, which God alone can avert, by an act of sovereign grace:

Oh, make me see Thee, Lord, where'er I go!  
 If mortal beauty sets my soul on fire,  
 That flame, when near to Thine must needs expire,  
 And I with love of only Thee shall glow.  
 Dear Lord, thy help I seek against this woe,  
 These torments that my spirit vex and tire;  
 Thou only with new strength canst re-inspire  
 My will, my sense, my courage faint and low.  
 Thou gavest me on earth this soul divine;  
 And Thou within this body weak and frail  
 Didst prison it—how sadly there to live!  
 How can I make its lot less vile than mine?  
 Without Thee, Lord, all goodness seems to fail.  
 To alter fate is God's prerogative.

Finally an overwhelming world-weariness weighs him down in the seventy-fourth:

What though strong love of life doth flatter me  
 With hope of yet more years on earth to stay,  
 Death none the less draws nearer day by day,  
 Who to *sad* souls *alone* comes lingeringly.  
 Yet why desire long life and jollity,  
 If in our *griefs* alone to God we pray?  
 Glad fortune, length of days, and pleasure slay  
 The soul that trusts to their felicity.  
 Then if at any hour through grace divine  
 The fiery shafts of love and faith that cheer  
 And fortify the soul, my heart assail,  
 Since nought achieve these mortal powers of mine,  
 Straight may I wing my way to heaven; for *here*  
 With lengthening days good thoughts and wishes fail.

It was not until his ninetieth year that his desire was granted, and death opened the way, if his hope was well founded, to new activities.

Milton, a kindred, though less devout and loving soul, nourished his genius at these breasts. With his subtle understanding of the Italian language, it is strange that he did not render some of Michelangelo's sonnets into English. They were first printed only fifteen years before Milton's

Italian journey, and he must have seen them. But no translation can convey a true sense of the weight and seriousness of Michelangelo's poetry. It is massive, grave, and pure. We close the book thinking with Wordsworth "how conversant his soul was with great things."

## THE FAME OF VICTOR HUGO

The purpose of this essay is to review the history of Victor Hugo's fame. It may thus be possible to arrive at an opinion, that shall not be founded on individual taste or mere caprice, as to the quality and order of his genius. We shall do well to defer to the judgment of the most competent among his countrymen. It has always been impossible for his English critics to find common ground. Matthew Arnold, for example, could say of him, in that apparently casual and parenthetical manner which veils some of his most audacious assumptions, that if the French were more at home in the higher regions of poetry "they would perceive with us that M. Victor Hugo, for instance, or Sir Walter Scott, may be a great romance-writer, and yet be by no means a great poet." In the eyes of Mr. Swinburne, Hugo was "the greatest Frenchman of all time," "the greatest poet of this century," "the spiritual sovereign of the nineteenth century,"—no less! Mr. Dowden, in an eloquent and sympathetic essay, considers chiefly Victor Hugo's public aspect,—his relation to politics, his patriotism, his character as a representative Frenchman. Throughout at least the early half of Hugo's career a large part of our public knew him as a dramatist and romancer almost exclusively. And yet, of the eminent French writers who, in this hundredth year from his birth, are estimating his place and importance in their literature, it is unlikely that many will take his romances into very serious account, or treat his dramas as if they possessed much vital and intrinsic excellence. Already, too, as in the case of Coleridge, it is being said of Victor Hugo that his value lies in the innovations which he made and the impulse he gave to other writers almost as much as in the power or the beauty of his works.

One might have expected less temerity of judgment. Even in these swiftly moving times, when men learn and forget so soon, sixteen years are a short period for so turbid and so vast a manifestation of literary effort to settle into clarity. And, moreover, there has been with us, all this time, the disquieting spectacle of Victor Hugo's spirit still stirring the waters; for, strong fighter that he was, even death did not silence him. A giant spectre of the man has projected itself, with grandiose and characteristic gesture, past the day that seemed to round off his earthly career. For sixteen years the enormous series of his volumes has kept on increasing, not by mere posthumous dribblings, but by substantial and characteristic books; and two of the most interesting contributions to literature in 1901 were from his hand.

Yet, in spite of his vigorous defense during a lifetime of amazing resourcefulness,—in spite, too, of a startling palingenesis,—time and the critics and the changing taste of the public have affected his reputation, and, on the whole, diminished it. It was, of course, inevitable that his mere popularity should thus dwindle, that his name should gradually become less frequent on men's lips. It must, indeed have been easy to foresee that in his case the falling off would be very marked, because, for many reasons, only in part connected with the degree of his literary excellence, he was a man of extraordinary prominence in a period of rapid political and social change. But apart from this mere fading of the light of day,—his day of actual presence before the public,—apart from this, and more unexpected, has been the diminution, already sensible to every eye, of that light of glory which he, and most other men also, took for the radiance of eternal fame. It may be that this centenary of his birth will witness a rally; but if so, it will be a rearguard pause in a swift retreat. Already newcomers in realms where he once held sway deny his ever having been a rightful sovereign there, and trace their lineage and legitimacy farther back. Already the



importance of his innovations is disputed. Already the public realizes that, if it is to continue reading him, competent judges must first winnow out the best of him, and present this in a compass that shall be to his whole production as perhaps one to twenty. Already critics have qualified and minimized their former praise, even of his best. Already literary artists have become attached to new methods, ideals, and tendencies, and many of his disciples themselves are no longer in a humble attitude toward their master.

Still, even if Victor Hugo's fame were in ruins, which it is not likely to be within a time that can be predicted, enough might be saved from the wreckage of so colossal an edifice for posterity to erect therewith an imposing temple. Would the superscription on the frieze be to the Man of Letters in general, or to the Romancer, or to the Dramatist, or to the Epic Poet, or to the Lyric Poet, or to the Innovator in literary theory and practice? Toward answering this question some progress has really been made by French critics, despite the popular tendency to confound all distinctions in indiscriminating praise. But to discover the answer and appreciate its cogency, we shall do well to take a glance at the history of Hugo's reputation. The stages of its development succeeded one another by sudden and strongly marked movements, although it is true (and baffling enough the fact is to the observer) that the advance was seldom made all along the front of his endeavor, but by detachments, like the charging of a modern line of battle. With respect to the general public, the advance was almost unchecked down to the year of Hugo's death. But criticism has had much to say at every important point, especially between 1835 and 1840, and after 1885.

If any excuse be required for considering with attention and even deference what the judgment of this higher court has been, it may be worth while to remember how very superior French criticism is. It has a substantive value of its own,—the best of it,—which rests both upon its formal ex-



cellence and upon its importance as a manifestation of human reason. In each of these elements it is at least equal to French poetry. Indeed, it would be difficult to point anywhere in the world, at present, to a more brilliant display of concerted literary talent than the writings of the French critics of our day. If in any large variety of intellectual success, any organization of the highest results of culture, France is distinctly a leader among the nations, it is in literary criticism; it is in applying to the problems of civilization that stored-up wisdom which her literature contains. No other country has had a succession of critics comparable for combined effectiveness to the French critics of the last eighty years. With all the individual genius of our own critics, from Coleridge and De Quincey to Mr. Dowden and Mr. Henry James and Mr. Howells, English criticism presents less unity of purpose and has exerted less influence. The French critics possess much in common, and, in spite of wide differences of opinion among them, their influence, on the whole, moves in a definite direction. Their style, with all its infinite variety and the distinct personality which each of them has impressed upon it in turn, has unfailingly the quality of being perfectly adapted to the subjects which they treat. It is alive and intelligent on every page,—almost every word a picture, almost every phrase a figure of speech. And how our respect for the French people is intensified when we reflect that such a style, so full of reference and allusion, so full of symbol and trope, presupposes a public capable of appreciating its qualities! It is true, indeed, in a wider sense, that the best we get from France, not merely in this form, but in every form of literature, is criticism, after all. We read even her poetry less for its sensuous beauty than for what in it appeals to our reason.

Victor Marie Hugo was born in the 26th of February, 1802. In 1817, two years after the century had, for France at least, begun a second time with the fall of Napoleon, he

had already found recognition as a poet. Between that date and his death, on May 22, 1885, amid many political revolutions and many changes of literary fashion, he was a constant and conspicuous presence in the intellectual life of his country. He was a great figurehead, prominent by virtue of his own qualities, and representing tendencies of forces at his back. That he was a pilot of the thought of France has been less commonly taken for granted; yet notwithstanding early opposition and recent obscurity, he has probably meant more to the world at large for the past seventy years than any other French man of letters in the same period. To be a public character in this sense required an unusual combination of strong elements: Hugo was intensely serious, and applied his personal force in many directions, now here, now there, but never failing to impart his individual touch. His public career in the narrow sense, as an influence in politics, is not without significance; he was almost officially the poet laureate of the Restoration; he was a member of the Assembly before the *coup d'état*; he was the Exile from 1851 to 1870; he sat in the Assembly in 1871, and in the Senate after 1876.

Moreover, he responded with ready sensibility to the spirit of the times, as it spoke in varied language at different epochs. In his early years he agonized between two ideals,—the dream of Napoleonic empire and the fiction of a permanently restored Bourbon kingship,—and for a while found safe common ground in Roman Catholicism as a basis of conservative government. Toward the middle of the century, when scientific research was establishing realms independent of political boundaries, he became more detached from politics and dogma, and gave himself up more to what he regarded as his function of prophecy. But when a usurper forced politics back upon his attention, Hugo shared the feeling of almost all the literary men around him, and excelled them all in promptitude and decisive-

ness of action. In the closing years of his life, on his return from exile, he flung himself into every movement for the aggrandizement of his country, with a leaning always toward socialism.

On the whole, his existence made for the maintenance in France of what is most admirable in her recent history, of what has been perhaps her principal contribution to the world,—a culture urbane, practical, and most conservative, but ready to kindle into radical idealism upon occasion. Yet it appears that his influence of this general character was much less profound than men used to imagine. These, however, are considerations which concern more particularly his own countrymen. Frenchmen may well be more interested than we can be in estimating his influence upon domestic life, upon public regard for religion and morality, upon the spirit of nationalism, upon social progress. Still, it may be worth while to observe that his reputation as the poet *par excellence* of domestic life became a subject of mirth to his detractors when he published “*Les Chansons des Rues et des Bois*,” in 1865; and that his humanitarian ideals have been termed naïve and hollow; and that he is declared to have been in general behind the spirit of the age, rather than its guide, in matters of religious and ethical thought, while, as to his political influence, he is held responsible more than any other man for the creation of the Napoleonic legend. Really, critics of the first order in France have come to regard Victor Hugo’s mark upon the culture of his age as the impress of only a human hand, and not the compelling touch of a god, and they have almost ceased to discuss the matter.

What engages their attention still is the delimitation of his qualities as a literary artist, and the question of the permanency of his fame. It would be interesting to know how many times on the 26th of February of this year 1902, the words, “*Ce siècle avait deux ans*,” will be quoted and these subjects opened for debate. It is an impressive thought

that, although Victor Hugo's latest publication appeared in 1901, his place in French literature began to be warmly discussed more than seventy years ago. William IV. was not yet King of England, nor Andrew Jackson yet President of the United States, when Victor Hugo's rank and influence in literature were already matters of animated interest to French critics.

At that time—let us say in 1828—it was almost generally conceded that the “*Odes et Ballades*,” notwithstanding the reactionary tone of their political ideas, were poetry of considerable merit. In versification they were just bold enough to give a sense of originality, though not so audacious as to excite alarm. But the drama “*Cromwell*,” published in 1827, with its preface challenging the sacred traditions of the French theatre, had awakened a storm of protest, and for many years to come, years that witnessed the publication of “*Hernani*,” “*Marion Delorme*,” “*Le Roi s’amuse*,” “*Lucrèce Borgia*,” “*Marie Tudor*,” “*Angelo*,” and finally “*Ruy Blas*” in 1838, his principles of dramatic composition and his methods of versifying in dramatic form were objects of much hostile criticism and, in equal measure, of enthusiastic praise. It was not till about 1840 that it became clear how large a field was really in dispute between classicism and romanticism,—not the drama, merely, but every form of imaginative composition, and indeed every one of the fine arts. Victor Hugo, more than any other writer, had blown the spirit of romanticism wide over the dry grass in every quarter of the plain, throwing “*Notre Dame de Paris*” as a firebrand into the region of prose fiction, and four astonishing handfuls of sparks into the thirstier levels of lyric poetry. It was not till some time after the publication of these four volumes—“*Les Orientales*,” 1829, “*Les Feuilles d’Automne*,” 1831, “*Les Chants du Crépuscule*,” 1835, and “*Les Voix Intérieures*,” 1837—that the public realized their import as contributions to the general struggle between the schools. When this reali-

zation came, and men began to look back upon the large and varied work of the poet, dramatist, and romancer, Hugo was recognized on all hands as a great force in contemporary literature, as perhaps the greatest French writer, and certainly as a man of whom it was safe to predict that he would have a remarkable career. In and about 1840 the world came around to him, and his election to the Academy, early in 1841, only sealed and confirmed the popular admission of his extraordinary claims to honor.

Three men, however, whose suffrage really counted for almost as much as the favor of all the rest of France, held back in a manner that, as was afterwards made only too evident, embittered for Hugo the wine of success. One of them, Sainte-Beuve, offended by silence. Considering his interest in the points at issue, and how many contemporary celebrities were among the subjects of his discourse, we may well be surprised that the name of Victor Hugo occurs so seldom in his "Causeries" and "Portraits" after 1835. Sainte-Beuve was, ostensibly at least, among the romanticists, though we know now that in reality he was a very uncertain convert and his heart was in the other camp. Many years later he wrote of himself: "I am a man most thoroughly suppléd and broken in to metamorphoses. I began frankly and crudely with what was most advanced in the eighteenth century,—with Tracy, Daunou, Lamarck, and physiology: there is the real basis of my intellectual character, after all. Thence I passed through the doctrinaire and psychological school of the *Globe* newspaper, but with mental reservations and without adhering to it. From that stage I went on to poetic romanticism and into the circle of Victor Hugo, and there I appeared to make a complete surrender of myself. . . . In all these voyages of my spirit I never alienated my will and my judgment, except for a brief time in the circle of Victor Hugo and under the influence of a charm." These last words are said to be at once an explanation and a confession, and to



allude to Madame Hugo. In 1868, on re-editing his "Portraits Contemporains," which contained flattering reviews of Hugo's work between 1831 and 1835, Sainte-Beuve appended a footnote which explains his silence after that period: "On reading them over again today, I admit that these articles on Victor Hugo satisfy me very imperfectly. And yet they are (if we add to them two old articles, the first of all, on the 'Odes et Ballades,' inserted in the *Globe* of the 2d and 9th of January, 1827) the only pieces of criticism which I have written expressly about his works. I have not treated of his dramas or his later romances or any of his collections of poetry subsequent to 1835; or if I have perchance written anything for my private view, I have suppressed it." And he goes to say that, dazzled though he has often been by Hugo's genius, he has never, since those early days, yielded him complete admiration: "Always, in praising or blaming him, I have wished him to be a little different from what he was or could be; always I have drawn him more or less toward me, according to my tastes and individual preferences; always I have set up, instead of the puissant reality before which I found myself, a softened or embellished ideal, which I detached from the reality to suit myself."

Sainte-Beuve has had enemies enough, who have insinuated that jealousy, either literary or private and very personal, was the real cause of his negative attitude toward Hugo after 1835. But knowing, in the light of his career, that his delicate and, after all, classical taste could not have surrendered to "Ruy Blas" or "La Légende des Siècles," we may easily now admit that, whatever the temptation to unfairness may have been, he really was perfectly true to himself in refusing further homage to Hugo. If he rejected Balzac, who thrashed about like leviathan in the sea of prose fiction, which to Sainte-Beuve was comparatively remote and uninteresting, by how much more must the great critic have turned his eyes away from the monstrous *ébats* of Hugo in the home



waters of drama and lyric poetry! If to bring the public back from its temporary infatuations to what has always been pleasing and elevating, if to dispel *engouements* by recalling attention to classic beauty and eternal truth,—if this be, as Sainte-Beuve declared it was, the proper function of criticism, he was never more truly fulfilling his mission, according to his light, than in maintaining with regard to Hugo a disquieting and piquant reserve.

But Nebuchadnezzar-Hugo could never forgive. And as the three stanch men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, refused, what time they heard “the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music,” to fall down and worship the image which the king had set up, so not only Sainte-Beuve, but two other critics of firm judgment and cultivated even if somewhat old-fashioned taste were cast into the fiery furnace of Hugo’s rage and fury, and “the form of his visage was changed against” Désiré Nisard and Gustave Planche.

The music of Babylon was not more varied and captivating than the harmonies which Hugo’s orchestra was at this time performing. Between the publication of “*Les Orientales*” in 1829 and “*Les Rayons et les Ombres*” in 1840, three other notable collections of lyric poetry appeared, as we have remarked—“*Les Feuilles d’Automne*,” “*Les Chants du Crépuscule*,” and “*Les Voix Intérieures*.”

Here were enough, if quantity, variety of form, novelty of matter, and personality of tone suffice to make a poet great,—here were surely enough, we might suppose, to compel the adhesion of every reader. Indeed, if Hugo had died in mid-career, these volumes would go far to establish a very considerable fame for him. Nisard and Planche, with what now seems perfect impartiality and good temper, with seriousness and deference and a high sense of responsibility, wrote discriminatingly, and incurred Hugo’s lasting hatred, though they really gave enthusiastic acknowledgment of his

lyric genius. Nisard, indeed, was at first wholly favorable to Hugo. In reviewing "Notre Dame de Paris" and "Les Feuilles d'Automne," in 1831, his praise was without reserve; and from him, a most conservative critic, it meant much, and was of great service to the poet. Why, then, does Hugo, thirty years later, in the time of his apotheosis, when mildness might have been expected from the god, go out of his way to vent his rancor on Nisard, with grotesque ingenuity of insult? It is because Nisard, admirer of his poetry though he was, yet ventured to qualify and to offer suggestions.

No man was better fitted to do this, and it had been well for Hugo if he had lent a less credulous ear to adulation and paid some attention to Nisard's kindly advice. The immediate cause of Hugo's bitterness was an article by Nisard, published in the *Revue de Paris* in 1836, which began inauspiciously as follows: "The last three productions of Victor Hugo have given some anxiety to his best friends." The essay is, however, sufficiently impersonal, and deals with general principles. The following extract, for example, is criticism of the highest order, penetrating, illuminating, large, and based on exact knowledge: "An imagination fecundated by a powerful memory,—here is the whole of M. Hugo's talent: it is by this that he is truly an innovator in our country, where we have no instance of a great writer who possessed nothing but imagination; it is by this that he has made a great stir, that he has aroused the younger generation, that he has acquired a tumultuous kind of glory. An imagination at once exact and abundant, with no element of feeling and without the balancing restraint of reason, but able sometimes to make a show of the former, and stumbling sometimes upon the sound and correct views of the latter,—this is all there is to M. Victor Hugo. And when we say that he has been an innovator, it is not meant as praise. In France, a country whose literature is essentially practical and full of sense, a writer who has only an imagination,

even though it be of the rarest kind, cannot be a great writer. The honor of our great poets consists especially in having expressed in perfect language some of the verities of practical life,—in having created, in some sort, the poetry of reason. Genius, in France, is an admirable concourse of all the fitnesses at once.” And in the same article Nisard remarks: “If there is truth in what you have just read, you must conclude that what we appeared to fear at the beginning of this article as a thing possible is perhaps a thing close at hand and inevitable,—to wit, the literary death of M. Victor Hugo.”

It cannot have been agreeable for Hugo to read this prophecy, even though it was followed, two pages later, by the admission that a poet so richly though defectively endowed might die and rise again, purified and strengthened, to run a more glorious course. This resurrection, Nisard ventured to suggest, could come about only if the poet, turning a deaf ear to flatterers, should “tear himself away from his false glory, and dip his soul in the double source of eternal thoughts,—solitude and reason.” And this is what Hugo did, in part, difficult as it must have been for him; and to this retirement to deeper feelings and the solitude of grief he owed unquestionably the new birth of his genius which we observe in “*Les Contemplations*.”

It was not a voluntary retirement, and Nisard had little enough to do with it. We must attribute Hugo's nearest approach to genuine human sympathy, and, in the opinion of many readers, his most affecting poetry, to his daughter's death, in 1843. Until then his life had been precociously progressive. He had reached the various stages of his domestic happiness and his public celebrity very early. His successes had been uninterrupted and cumulative. It is the general testimony of his contemporaries that this had spoiled his personal character; that he was self-willed, self-centered, and vain. His personality may be pertinent to our purpose if, as

his critics began to observe about 1835, he was too egotistic to give up his literary mannerisms, to fertilize the barren portions of his mind, to enrich his individuality by going outside of himself in sympathetic projection, and to strengthen his reason by exact discipline.

A few characteristic passages from Hugo's poetry of that period will indicate what his critics had in mind. There is something of Shelley's doctrine, though none of the poignant appealingness of Shelley's pain, none of Shelley's convincing seriousness, in the lines from the poem to the Greek hero Canaris, in "Chants du Crépuscule:"—

Car le héros est fort et le poète est saint !  
Les poètes profonds qu'aucun souffle n'éteint  
Sont pareils au volcan de la Sicile blonde  
Que tes regards sans doute ont vu fumer sur l'onde :  
Comme le haut Etna, flamboyant et fécond,  
Ils ont la lave au cœur et l'épi sur le front.

Again, from the poem *Sunt Lacrymæ Rerum* in "Les Voix Intérieures:"—

Nous, pasteurs des esprits, qui du bord du chemin,  
Regardons tous les pas que fait le genre humain,  
Poètes par nos chants, penseurs par nos idées,  
Hâtons vers la raison les âmes attardées.

And again, the amazing line in praise of poets:—

Tous ceux en qui Dieu se concentre.

These assertions of the poet's prerogative, these exaggerated statements of the poet's function, are not the "sound and correct views" which Nisard considered essential to great poetry. We have in Shelley many passages of the same import, but expressed plaintively rather than bombastically. What seems pompous in a man fed full of praises may have the dignity of a brave challenge to fate in one whom the world has treated ill, or who sincerely believes himself afflicted. Of the note of merely personal vanity instances are to be found

on almost every page of the volumes to which Nisard referred. In the poem on the death of his brother Eugène, in "Les Voix Intérieures," we have in one stanza several of the elements that gave offense: the eternal *Moi*, the consciousness of being a celebrated poet, and an unnecessary ostentation of grief,—grief without cause, often, and evidently a poetical "property:"—

Et moi, je vais rester, souffrir, agir et vivre;  
 Voir mon nom se grossir dans les bouches de cuivre  
 De la célébrité;  
 Et cacher, comme à Sparte, en riant quand on entre,  
 Le renard envieux qui me ronge le ventre,  
 Sous ma robe abrité.

He was careful enough not to hide "the fox." It was a "property."

And Gustave Planche, to merit the insults which Hugo fastened to his name in after years,—what was the enormity of his offense? Only that he followed Nisard, two years later, with a more thoroughgoing examination of the poet's tendencies, and expressed dissatisfaction with the monotony and insignificance of his ideas, and amusement at his vanity, his *jactance*. He wrote with cruel courage as follows: "M. Hugo has reached a decisive hour: he is now thirty-six years old, and lo! the authority of his name is growing less and less. . . . As for the works which he has signed with his name during the last twenty years, he must make up his mind to see them disappear soon under the invading flood of oblivion. This is a hard saying, I admit, and yet it expresses without exaggeration a thought to which many minds have already given admittance. However, the hard saying need not be taken in an absolute sense; if the works of M. Hugo seem to us to be condemned to speedy forgetfulness, the name of M. Hugo will find a place among those of the boldest, the most skillful, the most persevering innovators, and surely this incomplete glory is not without value. . . . If



he tries a new course, if he transforms himself, if he seeks a new birth, if he renounces the love of words for the love of ideas, in two years criticism will have to pronounce upon a man whom we do not yet know." Admitting that Hugo's original endowment had been well cultivated in one respect, and that he had wonderful command of words, Planche continues: "He says all he wishes to say, but I must add that he has nothing to say. . . . He forgets to feel and to think." He dismisses Hugo's dramas with something like disdain: "The dramas of M. Hugo are, in our opinion, the feeblest part of his works."

The critics of that day were very little affected by Hugo's romances, except as throwing light on the poet's temperament and resources of mind and heart. In their view, the dramas, also, while extremely important as "innovations," possessed far less intrinsic value than the poems. Indeed, as we shall see, the critics of our own day maintain essentially the same attitude.

These "hard sayings" date from 1838. Within five years Hugo did much to make them seem unjustly severe by writing a large part of "*Les Contemplations*" and of "*Les Misérables*." Yet as we read the works upon which Nisard and Planche based their criticism we must admit its cogency. Much as the poetry of those early volumes may stir us, we feel how unfortunate it would have been if he had allowed himself to become more confirmed in his mannerisms, and had continued to be satisfied with his emotional and intellectual range. The poems of "*Les Contemplations*" show perhaps no very marked technical advance; but that was not necessary. No one could ask for better technique than Hugo had already acquired; and if he afterwards made wonderful progress it was simply heaping up the measure of perfection. But it is a new man speaking now. It is a man who has suffered. Varied as are the subjects in this collection, and great as is the advance in emotional and intellectual maturity shown by



many of the poems, one series of pieces is the real heart of the whole, and their superior loveliness indicates what was no doubt the principal cause of the improvement. These are the poems which commemorate his daughter's death. They fulfill the requirement of his critics, that he should make self subordinate, and write at the dictation of love or some other universal passion. Hence this *dolce stil nuovo*. Modern French poetry has nowhere expressed more touchingly the deep heart of man.

In 1841 Hugo was received into the Academy, and in 1845 he was made a peer of France. After the *coup d'état* of December 2, 1851, he left the country, and was formally banished. He sojourned at Brussels and on the island of Jersey, and finally settled in Guernsey, where he made his home till September, 1870. When offered amnesty he declined it, and returned to France only when the empire had dissolved. In 1853 he published a volume of poetical satire against Louis Napoleon and his adherents, called "Les Châtiments." Three years later he published "Les Contemplations," a large part of which, however, had been written before his exile. The first series of "La Légende des Siècles" appeared in 1859, "Les Misérables" in 1862, "Les Chansons des Rues et des Boies" in 1865, "Les Travailleurs de la Mer" in 1866.

The romances being, after all, of inferior importance as compared either with the novels of the best French writers of fiction—Balzac, let us say, or George Sand—or with the poetry of Hugo himself, we may, in this brief sketch, leave them out of consideration. Their most striking qualities, perhaps, are a vague but emphatic humanitarianism and an inconsecutive style, which set them apart from the writings of other men, in a place honorable or low according to the reader's feeling for reality and prose. But whatever one's opinion of their artistic excellence may be, their fervid didactic passages, their soaring flights of vision, and their pervading lyric afflatus possess independent value, and make a strong appeal, especially to the young.

"*La Légende des Siècles*" is a collection of narrative poems, in epic style, but often unmistakably lyric in spirit. They were designed to present in concrete episodes a history of civilization. Some of them, a great many of them, are of a very high order. Victor Hugo nowhere else performs more astounding miracles of versification and diction, his fertility is nowhere else so abundantly illustrated; whether true to history or not, many of these narratives give to the dead past an undeniable vitality. We almost forget what critics like M. Lemaître have called to our attention, namely, that the general ideas which are insisted on so strenuously are few and commonplace. It is, for the time being, enough for us to realize, with admiration and gratitude, that this great lyric poet was also a narrative poet, endlessly resourceful, with almost as much virtuosity at his command as a Chaucer even, or a Schiller, and able here and there to write with entire objectivity.

"*Les Chansons des Rues et des Bois*" are masterpieces in a lighter vein. Their subjects, it may be said in general, are the same as those favorite topics of Béranger, the mansard and alcove of the Latin Quarter. The songs of Béranger, however, are gayety itself, and sufficiently unreal to possess a certain innocency, a certain detachment. But Hugo's reminiscences—if they are reminiscences—dwell feelingly upon points which Béranger touched lightly. We look curiously at the date of the volume.

"*L'Année Terrible*," published in 1872, is a collection of poems occasioned by the war, the siege of Paris, and the Commune. "*Quatrevingt-treize*," Hugo's third monumental romance, was published in 1874. Between that date and his death appeared two more series of "*La Légende des Siècles*;" "*L'Art d'être Grand-père*," a delicious picture of his home life in old age; "*Les Quatre Vents de l'Esprit*"; and other less notable but equally large volumes of poetry, which contain signs of failing genius. Several new volumes of his

poetry have been printed since his death, among them "Toute la Lyre," which includes many poems of high quality, dating from various periods of his life.

It may be said that between 1838 and 1885 Hugo's literary reputation received scarcely a single check. On his return to France he entered upon such a period of idolization as no other man of letters ever enjoyed,—longer than the period allotted to Voltaire. Of his popularity there can be no doubt. But literary criticism in France is admirably independent of mere popular vogue. The two most authoritative critics twenty years ago, not to say the two most magisterial, were probably Faguet and Schérer. About the time of Hugo's death the former wrote an analysis of his qualities, which marks an epoch in the history of opinion on this subject. M. Faguet did not hesitate to avail himself of what was known of Hugo the man, in order to understand his works, and he says, "The truth is that Victor Hugo was an ordinary and mediocre character." In support of this judgment he mentions Hugo's rancor, his swollen vanity, his want of tact, his having no sense of the ridiculous,—in short, his pedantry. "Of real wit, such as was possessed by La Fontaine, Molière, Voltaire, and Heine, Victor Hugo had not a trace," although he did, M. Faguet admits, have an inferior species of wit, "a certain dashing, unbridled, and adventurous fancy." M. Faguet grants him, also, a certain kind of sensibility: not the finest kind, but rather, indeed, a common, bourgeois kind, which most men possess, though few have ever turned it to so much account in literature. Proceeding in his analysis, M. Faguet remarks: "It is easily seen that he has few ideas, and even that he does not care for ideas, nor for men who possess them; and at the same time we behold him talking incessantly about ideas, and forever exalting 'thinkers,' 'great minds,' and 'sublime verities.' . . . It is a commonplace to say that he is a trivial moralist and not well acquainted with man, and that the heroes of his novels and

dramas are not alive and have no concreteness and complexity, being only the magnificent speaking-trumpets of his sonorous muse, and by the same token hollow as a horn." It may, at first thought, seem as if a mediocre man, deficient in refined sensibility and in wit, and so ill equipped with general ideas, could hardly, then, be a great poet; but M. Faguet, with some delicate manœuvring, presently discovers, in Hugo's power of composition, his mastery of diction, and his gift of rhyme and rhythm, quite sufficient grounds for concluding: "He is our greatest lyric poet. He is almost our only epic poet. He would be, for style and rhythm, our most skillful artist in verse if La Fontaine did not exist."

Is it not going too far, however, to call Hugo an epic poet? If words mean anything, and if distinctions are to be preserved at all, he wrote no epic poem; and his narrative poems in epic style are disparate in tone, and possess no unity of subject. They are not even, therefore, branches of an epic cycle. Moreover, just as we may say that Browning, though employing for the most part lyrical and narrative forms, is really dramatic in temperament, and has imparted a dramatic spirit to nearly all his work, so Hugo, whatever form he may adopt, be it dramatic, narrative, or critical, verse or prose, is always and inevitably a lyric poet. He is a singer, and the subject, almost the only subject of his song, is himself, with his views, his feelings, his ideals.

Among judgments pronounced by men of eminent authority at the end of Hugo's life, Schérer's is one of the most favorable. It occurs, to be sure, in an article which is little more than a note, dated May 22, 1885, the day of Hugo's death, and entirely eulogistic, as the occasion demanded. He writes: "Hugo has been more and better than the head of a school: he has been a creator, an initiator. I see no one to compare with him in this,—neither Ronsard, nor Corneille, nor Voltaire." He mentions "Hugo's continual development, unceasing fresh departures and new surprises; his force of temper-

ament, power of hard work, and length of life; the immensity of his production, the variety of his forms of expression." In conclusion he calls attention to Hugo's generous ideas and to his personal qualities,—his patriotism, humanity, and faith. "Yes, his faith!" he exclaims. "Victor Hugo was an optimist,—that is to say, a believer; he had confidence in human nature, in society and its future. Glory will never fall to the skeptics; the people love only those who share the certitudes or the illusions on which they live themselves." This is a sufficient account of the causes of Hugo's popularity; but fame is a different kind of glory, and we may find more to enlighten us as to the progress of Hugo's fame in writings more remote from the day of his death.

M. Brunetière and M. Lemaître will suffice for our purpose, both because of their eminence and because they represent two different manners of criticism. M. Brunetière, being especially interested in all that concerns the drama, has much to say about Hugo; but the long and short of it is that he dismisses his dramatic productions as of far less consequence than his lyric poetry, and concentrates attention upon this. In an essay written in 1886, his attitude reminds us that the point of view of the best judges has not changed since 1836. His appreciation of Hugo's real excellence is enthusiastic, but even Planche did not analyze his defects with so much mordant energy. He admits that Hugo is the greatest lyric poet of France, and agrees with earlier critics in thinking that imagination was his master faculty. But he is keenly aware of his decadence, of the inferiority of much of his later work. " '*Les Chansons des Rues et des Bois,*' " he says, "marked the beginning of the decline, and, by imperceptible degrees, there remained of this poetical imagination in the Solitary of Hauteville House only an inimitable versifier, an astonishing rhetorician, and the old satyr who, if he showed his face already in '*Les Chansons des Rues et des Bois,*' displayed himself more cynically in '*Le Théâtre en Liberté.*' " This judgment



is not too morose, in view of the documents. It is, indeed, disillusioning to find that the poet of domestic life, the inconsolable mourner, the celebrant of an old religion and the prophet of a new faith, "le songeur profond," "l'exile farouche," "l'homme à l'œil morne," "le vieux marcheur sombre," should sing even more ardently of Suzon and Fanchette than of his favorite archangels, and make the ludicrous admission that

Aucune délicatesse  
N'est plus riante ici-bas  
Que celle d'une comtesse  
Mouillant dans l'herbe ses bas.

"What was the use," cries M. Brunetière, "of having poured forth so many Pleurs dans la Nuit, and of being called Victor Hugo, if one is to end thus like the singer of Lisette, but without ever having had his gayety?"

In a passage which is less expressive of offended taste, and, therefore, perhaps, has greater weight, M. Brunetière remarks that "it is not by his ideas, which are few, of little import, of little originality, and seldom his own, that Hugo has influenced our age, but by his rhetoric." He also concludes, with the older critics, that in French literature "Victor Hugo is perhaps the only poet who has never recognized any other law or submitted to any other domination than those of his imagination." "While all the others," he continues, "and—without mentioning our classics—while Lamartine, Musset, Vigny, in this century, realize, complete, and illuminate the idea by the image, Hugo alone never thought except in so far as he imagined; and as it is the rhyme that constitutes the core of his verses, so, even in his prose, one may say literally that the image creates the idea." Is not this, we are impelled to ask, the natural and usual order of poetic creation? But M. Brunetière has his ideals, which he finds in "the poetry of reason," and it is a long time since the poetry of reason has been regarded as the highest standard in English. M. Brunetière shows that he is not inaccessible to Hugo's



charm, in the following enthusiastic terms: "Of the Victor Hugo of 'Les Contemplations' and 'La Légende des Siècles,' one may say that his fecundity of invention, and especially his poetic imagination, are more than incomparable, and are veritably unique in our literary history."

M. Lemaître, in his amusing but fundamentally serious way, has been even less respectful to Hugo than M. Brunetière. Yet, like his predecessors, from Nisard to M. Faguet, he finds a saving quality in Hugo's command of language. "If then," he writes, "we attempt to define Hugo's genius by what is essentially his own, I fear we must set aside his ideas and his philosophy; for they do not belong to him, or belong to him only by the excess, the enormity, the prodigious redundance, of the translation he has made of them. And, moreover, he has adopted them only because they lent themselves to this enormity and this excess of expression. With him, it is the manipulator of words, the man of style, who dominates the man of thought and feeling. To analyze and describe his poetics and his rhetoric is to define the whole of Hugo,—or almost." Then M. Lemaître shows how this virtuosity itself furnishes ideas, or at least produces great poetry: "He was the king of words. But words, after so many centuries of literature, are impregnated with sentiments and thought: they necessarily, then, by virtue of their combinations, forced him to think and feel. Thus this dreamer, who was so far from being philosophical, has at times deep verses, and this poet of much more imagination than tenderness has delicate and tender verses. Then, since the slightest idea suggests to him an image, and as images call up others and link themselves together in his mind with supernatural rapidity, the subject which he treats may be never so meagre and insufficient in its essence, yet the form in which he clothes it is a vast enchantment." M. Lemaître protests, however, that even this enchantment fails with him, for he says, "Hugo never had more than one manner," and remarks that the facility with

which he has been parodied "proves at least that there is in the poetry of the author of *'Les Quatre Vents de l'Esprit'* an enormous share of almost mechanical and automatic fabrication, something in which neither the heart nor the mind is concerned." And he asserts furthermore that "his failure to understand men's souls and human life with its complexities is incredible."

It is needless to say that the opinions quoted in this paper, though they faithfully represent the judgment of those men in France, during the last sixty-five years, who have been best qualified to write about Victor Hugo, do not coincide with the popular judgment. An account of Hugo's literary reputation with the reading public would be a story of continued successes and accumulating praise, at least up to the time of his death. The public has not even made, in regard to his works, the primary discrimination which the critics one and all make tacitly and as a matter of course; for the public still thinks of Hugo as not merely a great poet, but a great dramatist and a great romance-writer. It is not often that an artist of any kind or degree has so thoroughly utilized all his resources in the service of the public. None of Hugo's qualities were wasted. None of them, except perhaps the finest parts of his excellence as a versifier, were over the heads of the public. The steady-going world has appreciated, also, those elements of his success which bear a close analogy to business virtues,—the shrewdness, calculation, and foresight, the sense of opportuneness, the careful consideration of demand and supply,—and all this in a poet, in a romanticist, in a contemporary of Musset and Béranger! Length of days and quantity of work done,—the public is deeply impressed by these. To the critics, however, who realize how small an amount ultimately survives of the production of almost any writer, quantity is of little account. Will there be more of Hugo than of Musset in the anthologies five hundred years hence? Which of the

two utters the note of deeper feeling? Which speaks more nearly from the inmost heart of the age? Criticism asks such questions as these, and cares less than the public about the variety and amount of an artist's productiveness. If we remember how secure in English literature is the fame of Gray and of Keats, we shall find it easy to understand that criticism is probably right in affirming that quality is all.

On one point criticism and the popular mind are agreed. The optimism which Schérer notes with such lively appreciation was one source of Hugo's acceptability with the world at large. Modern French poetry is dyed deep with melancholy. From André de Chénier down to the singers now alive, it is tinged with a vague sadness, which often seems to have no meaning. Of all these poets, Hugo has perhaps least often lent his ringing voice to tones of world-weariness or nervous distress or moral despair. His was a life so happy that even through his darkest expressions of sorrow there shines forth an acknowledgment of gratitude.

It would seem that in one respect the arbiters of his fame have failed to do him justice. To a foreign observer, they appear to make too little account of the reforms he effected in versification, in dramatic principles, and in literary standards generally. In other words, they seem scarcely to appreciate his importance as the chief of the romantic school. If we try to imagine the history of nineteenth-century French drama and poetry without Victor Hugo, we see that surely these arts would have been poorer not only by the loss of a most accomplished and productive master, but also by the absence of those innovations for which more credit is due to him than to any other man, and which have by this time been so generally accepted that we fail to realize their value. A comparison from English literature will make the case clearer. Suppose that in 1817 English literature had been where it was in 1797, dominated almost entirely by classical ideals; and suppose that then a man had begun to be prominent whose works combined in themselves some of the most novel

lyrical qualities of Shelley, Browning, Tennyson, and Mr. Swinburne, besides dramatic qualities with which our recent literature affords no parallel! This man would indeed have been an innovator. And if he had lived to be eighty-three years old, and remained productive and resourceful to the last, his career would have been comparable to that of Victor Hugo.

On the whole, however, it may as well be admitted that the verdict of the critics is just. It might perhaps here and there be a little more generous. But we must remember that Sainte-Beuve and Nisard and Lemaître, at least, began by being ardent admirers of Hugo. If they lost their enthusiasm and freed themselves from his domination, we may believe them when they tell us that the process was involuntary and painful. They could no longer constrain their better judgment. And their verdict will stand.

More and more, as education brings the masses up to a level where current literature becomes one of their interests, popularity and fame will have to be carefully distinguished. They rest on quite different bases. There is no longer any ground for the assumption that what the reading public enjoys will be approved by persons who know most or have the most refined taste. In Victor Hugo's case, there is at present every indication that what literary history will say a hundred years hence will be something like this: He was immensely popular in his day and long afterwards. Although he was a character and an intelligence of secondary order, he was popularly accepted as a leader of opinion and feeling in the nineteenth century. But posterity has hearkened not so much to the popular voice as to the great French critics of his time; and they found him wanting in many qualities which the larger public thought he possessed. In compensation, the critics appreciated, and posterity appreciates, more than the general public of his day ever did, Hugo's wonderful mastery of the French language, Hugo's energy and versatility, Hugo's exuberant imagination.

## BALZAC'S HUMAN COMEDY

Balzac is a portentous and mysterious figure. He is the most difficult of novelists, yet he is everywhere popular. His works are of most uneven quality, yet they are read indiscriminately. No one knows, until he has gone through all of them, which is the head of the tangled skein and in what parts the cord is rotten tow and where it is spun gold. And few indeed are they who have wound off the whole interminable coil.

When one has lived long in Balzac's company, one is in danger of running too freely into figures. It is natural, then, that I should feel elated at completing a ten years' task, (for it came to be a task towards the end) in which I have spent many hundreds of hours reading the Human Comedy.

Although it is not light reading, either in matter or style, but fiction of the most substantial sort that ever went by that name, it is not so much the time and application that cost heavily, as the long subjection to the tyranny of one man's thought. I have often rebelled, fending against the showy "M. de Balzac" as an inferior person who was claiming altogether too much, or, again, fighting for my own with the great and honored thinker, in all humble obstinacy. In either case I knew where to find him. It was much worse when the man disappeared and I found myself confronted by a huge reasoning machine, with no beginning or end, no human instincts or purposes, that poured forth its opinions regardless of my applause or demur.

In the long run Balzac has come off with a real personality. I even feel that I partly know him. Once vague and monstrous as a shadow in a fog, elusive and ventriloquent, he has at last taken on the form and voice of a man. I



was half sick of shadows by the time he turned and let me see his face. It now appears why the apparition was so disquieting: Balzac has two aspects. One side of him was smitten with genius and is sublime.

He looms up, after more than half a century, the father of the naturalistic school and its best example still. His supremacy among French novelists is almost unquestioned; and this, unless I am much mistaken, because he is, on the whole, the most consistent truth-teller. But to his assiduous reader he is not only the greatest French novelist, and the leader of a school once dominant, and perhaps once again to be dominant: there are moments when one questions whether it is not as a speculator in political and social problems—in other words, as a practical philosopher—that Balzac is most truly remarkable. In public life, as financier or statesman, he would have erected a magnificent edifice of fame or been buried under glorious ruins. If we may judge merely from the astounding number and breadth of his general views, and without considering temperament and character, he was the only Frenchman of his time capable of continuing Napoleon's work of reorganizing French institutions.

Actually and potentially, therefore, here were greatness enough. But this is by no means all. One of Balzac's distinctions among novelists is to have conceived the most stupendous plan in the history of letters, a plan involving the most prolonged and multiform toil and the highest faculties of observation, reflection, and literary skill—and to have executed it. It is not his artistic talent only, nor his remarkable personality, nor his relation to a great literary movement, which compels our wonder, but chiefly the imposing spectacle of the *ensemble* of his best work, its vast quantity, its intricate organization, its fulness of meaning. This complex whole, comprising over ninety separate novels and tales and five dramas, and covering more than ten thousand closely printed large octavo pages, he called "The Human Comedy."



It is a continent of thought, with dangerous coasts, malarious jungles, and dreary deserts, with fertile plains, rich forests, and a few mountain-tops that kiss high heaven. The explorer who should see but the shore-line or the equatorial regions of this Africa, would bear scant witness to the truth. There are certain tropical fevers which have to be endured in the process of becoming acclimated, and after that there must be years of patient travel.

Owing to his enormous productivity and what Henry James calls the density of his style, Balzac will in the course of time come to be represented generally by only a few of his books. A natural economy will have selected these for the world to read. But his gigantic power will never be fully felt unless the *Human Comedy* be taken into account as a whole.

When the inspiration came to him to unite the characters of his books in a complete and self-existent world, by causing them to appear and reappear, to interact upon one another, to develop and degenerate, as real human beings do, Balzac was thirty-three or thirty-four years old and already an author of considerable repute. This was in 1833, when he had in hand two of his most profound and elaborate novels, "*Le Médecin de Campagne*" and "*Eugénie Grandet*." He had published anonymously in his youth no less than twenty inferior novels, and during the last four years a large number of superb short stories and several very remarkable romances and studies. He perceived the possibility of bringing the best of his past work, beginning with "*Les Chouans*" and including "*La Maison du Chat qui pelote*," "*Gobsec*," "*La Peau de Chagrin*," "*La Femme de Trente Ans*," "*Le Colonel Chabert*," and "*Le Curé de Tours*," into organic relation with the multitude of personages growing to maturity in his teeming mind. He realized at once the originality of his idea. For the moment he was overwhelmed with the rush of thoughts which it occasioned. No literary conception of equal audacity had been

executed by any man since Dante. Comparison with the Divine Comedy was obvious, but Balzac did not until several years later accept the title, *La Comédie Humaine*, suggested by one of his friends.

His plan was no less than to create an imaginary world which should reflect completely the whole of French society in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first four decades of the nineteenth. It should be a cross-section of the life of his time in France, so that, as he said, if all histories and other records were destroyed, a true picture of his age and country could be evoked from his books. Both high and low should be there, both virtue and vice. Poverty should elbow wealth. The individuality of country towns and provincial cities should be expressed, and Paris drawn out like a map. Politics, finance, military life, manufacturing, farming, art, journalism, law, medicine, the priesthood, all trades and professions in short, should find in him their historian; and in every relation of life woman as well as man should be represented. His collection of characters should be a vast historical museum, an animated museum, where the figures moved and spoke and changed, according to the unvarying laws which govern human action. In no merely boastful spirit, though a less humble man never existed, Balzac unfolded his purpose in the *avant-propos* of the *Comédie Humaine*, nine years later, in 1842.

It was with the conception of this gigantic plan that the new life of Balzac began—the life of crushing labor, made endurable, and even gloriously happy, by a sense of combat and the frequent glow of accomplishment. The extraordinary personality of the man was flung into the balance against the apparent impossibility of carrying out this preposterous scheme. Without the challenge of impossibility he would never have done what was indeed impossible for any one else. He was one of those men with whom conscience is a sense of work done or neglected, who measure their moral suc-

cess by the number of hours they have kept their hands to the plow, rather than by the number of furrows they have turned. They may pretend to be discouraged by obstacles or to yearn for release, but are never really happy unless at war with circumstances, and never miserable except on holidays. When such men are endowed by nature with rude vitality and deeply spurred by ambition, they can carry enormous burdens. Balzac's early letters reveal him as possessed of rare animal spirits, great heartiness, and a powerful will. He is evidently hugging himself with delight at being left alone in Paris, on a pittance small for even French economy, and face to face with fate. No doubts assail him. He has no misgivings. He is entirely self-confident, and demands only time and freedom. As seen in his early letters, *dans un grenier, à vingt ans,*" such an attitude is refreshing.

But with his first success, when we might look for a serious review of his powers and a dedication of his life to some unselfish end, the correspondence loses its youthful charm. There is still a brave pugnacity in the man, but his once elastic spirits have lost their spring. Desire for sudden wealth and for luxury and social recognition has led him into business speculation, which though congenial to his disposition, is not congruent with his art. Business, rather than literature, is the prevalent subject of his published correspondence.

There was apparently great need of business faculty to cope with the publishers of that time. By working sixteen hours a day, issuing his novels first serially in newspapers, then in volumes, and later in collected editions, this very rapid producer was barely able to keep out of bankruptcy, although his debt appears to have been, at its largest, only 120,000 francs. His publishers bound him by complicated contracts, and enslaved his pen for months at a time by advancing him sums of money. Cries of despair, imprecations, elaborate schemes for postponing payments and securing credit, pages

of figures, calculations of thousands and millions, a veritable smoke of rage and endeavor, issue from the room of the midnight worker, caught in the toils, and tangling them by frantic struggles. All sense of proportion in life seems to be lost. The only thing in the universe worth doing is to get books written and have them sold to the best advantage.

As may easily be imagined, the fault was not wholly with the publishers. Balzac's tastes were sumptuous and oriental, not to say vulgar. Capable of the sternest self-repression, he yet chose to surround himself with costly baubles, and not only with the comforts and luxuries but the follies of a *parvenu*. Yet it is amazing how often, in this turmoil of buying and selling, litigation, quarrels, pushing and climbing, the calm artist sat almost unmoved. This is the more remarkable when one considers the disquieting effect of debts upon a mind that longs for freedom from preoccupation with any but ideal cares. Who would suppose that perfect tales, like "L'Auberge rouge" and "La Grenadière," the latter full of quiet poetry, and both of them exact in every detail, as if they embodied a whole year's leisurely reflection, were written each in one night to meet a creditor's demand? "Le Médecin de Campagne," the book in which Balzac thought to rival the New Testament and the "Imitation of Christ," and which indeed possesses a tranquil profusion of feeling, was carried about, during composition, from city to city while its author made combinations for outwitting publishers and booksellers, and it was counted on to establish his fortunes. It must be admitted that many passages in other books, particularly in "La Peau de Chagrin," which he wrote under hard pecuniary stress, betray undue haste and a desire for sensational, readily coined success. Nevertheless, the ideals of the attic were evidently subsisting still, under the mature man's grosser aspirations.

Balzac's double nature, the great artist dwelling inseparably with the restless man of business, the lofty spirit hampered

by the too too solid flesh, the buoyant intelligence cramped by debt, betrayed by unworthy ambition, and deadened by toil—Balzac's double nature was manifest in his bodily habit. He was a little over five feet tall, very broad for his height, with delicate hands and feet, and a face that stirred the admiration of men's minds, but failed to charm their hearts. It was a fat, but not heavy, face, full of vivacity, but without graciousness, very firm, with pouting lips and small, elegantly-moulded chin, brown eyes that are said to have given forth a peculiar radiance, and a broad-based, uneven brow. It is a bold, self-confident face, with a challenge to fortune written on it squarely. The regions of the eye and mouth are sensual. There is firmness, without nobility. One can realize that the active, stirring, noisy little man of affairs is here, as well as the fruitful creator of ideas, the constructor of a social world. Short, heavy, fat, and dark,—the famous M. de Balzac looks not unlike a Turkish pasha. But never did a frame bespeak more endurance; never did a face express more determination, coupled with full and proper consciousness of power. Looking at his portrait or at Rodin's bust, it becomes at last possible for one to believe that this one man wrote the *Human Comedy*.

However much we can learn of Balzac's disposition and character from his letters and his portrait, it is in his novels principally that the whole man stands revealed,—a marvellous though not altogether admirable or even lovable personality. Without detriment to the individuality of the city-full of persons in the *Human Comedy* (there are over 2,000 of them), the spirit of their creator pervades all their views and actions.

And it would be absurd to expect that it should not. Otherwise superiority in writing, painting, building, composing, would be wholly a matter of technical perfection. A man of Balzac's intensity could not possibly write without expressing *himself*. His abundance of vitality, his industry, his sense of the reality of things and persons, give vigor and massive-



ness to his work, and impart that sense of the concrete which is a novelist's first object. The reader is always conscious that beneath the shining verbal texture of each page, quivers a mass of intellectual fibre, unbroken in continuity, tenacious and alive. If sometimes this organic web reaches through with eager fingers and clutches our attention inopportunely, this is a justification of Balzac's own claim that he was more than a novelist—a poet. The exactness of his descriptions of external and physical phenomena gives us a high sense of his intellectual conscientiousness. The subtlety with which he penetrates complex social relations and lifts to light the most delicate hidden motives bewilders us almost to the point of exasperation, as if we were beholding a magician's feats. We respect the logical tenacity of one who can with a clear head unroll so many a long web of intrigue. In short, what we feel behind the printed page is an audacious yet sure mind, of most extraordinary power.

The strong excellence of Balzac's work is thus a result of the intense exercise of intellectual faculties. Something more, however, is requisite,—something not purely intellectual, but akin to moral sanity. In such an undertaking as his, ultimate success will be denied an author who does not see life thoroughly and see it whole.

It is appropriate, therefore, in inquiring whether Balzac accomplished his adventurous purpose of mirroring the world, to consider, first, the range of his ideas and observations, and secondly the justness of his vision. We need not suffer ourselves to be dazed by the array he musters of titles, names, qualities, incidents, things, and persons. There is something imposing in having written so many pages of energetic language, but it is not enough to have conceived and expressed so many thousands of thoughts. We look for something beyond even that large and varied representation of the classes and occupations of society, that broad geographical distribution of scenes, and that vast number of typical characters



which Balzac provides. All these without perspective, or set forth in a proportion other than nature's own, would be chaos and not order, would be monstrous and not artistic.

Here was the dangerous point in Balzac's enterprise. Here was the point where he needed a poetic sympathy, a moral elevation, and a humility in the face of nature, which he did not possess. His undertaking, after all, was too presumptuous. I mean his larger exterior design of reproducing the whole of contemporary French life. A man might, and Balzac did, assemble a sufficient number of the representative features of a mimic world, but no man could fit together the wheels and rods of this intricate machine so justly that at his command they should harmoniously stir. And so it is not indeed a throbbing, articulate world, this creation of Balzac, but a workshop. Materials lie here, heaped in profusion. Specimens of all the metals and of every kind of wood are piled in ordered rows. Cast-off experiments encumber the floor. Much refuse rots and rusts in the corners. Here and there we see a worn chisel or a broken hammer. The great Machine stands there, to be sure,—gigantic, imposing, and many parts of it work to perfection, separately, but as a whole, it remains merely an object of curiosity. The motive power is never applied, the bands never tighten, the wheels never turn.

But how exquisite and how powerful are many of the parts of this huge mechanism! How many pages and chapters, nay how many whole books, of the Human Comedy are written with absolute mastery! How rich in detail and at the same time how thoroughly dominated by some great idea! What other novelist or historian has written accurately and vitally about so comprehensive a range of human activities—about almost the entire social system of a great country? What a grasp of technicalities! What opulence of correct and luminous ideas about all the trades, professions, occupations, motives, and ambitions of men and women! What other novel-

ist could write about county-clerks, recorders, receivers, assessors, appraisers, executors, boards of pardon, legislatures, commissioners, surveyors, police, cabinet officers, ambassadors, about grocerymen, stock-brokers, and farmers, and about bishops, curates, canons and deacons, and about painting and sculpture and architecture, and about the tangled intricacies of law,—and all this with a master's hand? In these, and many other departments of life, including the walks of crime, his terminology is considered to be correct, and he has, one feels, caught the inward spirit.

Granting that the details in Balzac's representation are numerous enough, they might still not be true to life. In the main, however, I believe they are faithful. There are many exceptions, but in most cases the illusion is wonderful. A person unfamiliar with French literature might suppose, for instance, that Canalis, in "*Modeste Mignon*" was a real poet. One might be excused for seeking the names of General Hulot and Colonel Chabert in the histories of France, or of Desplein and Bianchon on the rolls of eminent French physicians and surgeons. But they are pure creatures of Balzac's ingenious imagination. Whenever he introduces a noble family, he describes its coat of arms in heraldic terms. Every character who occupies a public station is attached cunningly to historical events and persons. Balzac never intimates by a genial wink that he is only a showman after all, as Scott and Thackeray are forever doing. He is always serious in this task of creating an atmosphere of verisimilitude. He even sacrifices many an opportunity of being graceful or humorous or winning. Perhaps this forbearance has cost him dear; for he is the least beloved of all great novelists.

The heavy accumulations of facts, real and fictitious, which he does not for any consideration of mercy or self-pity withhold, help to deceive the reader. It seems incredible that a novelist would burden his pages with catalogues of bric-a-brac unless veracity with a hand of iron guided his passive

pen. So argues the reader, all unconscious of the fact that to Balzac the furniture of a room was just as real and therefore just as worthy of imaginative reproduction, as the qualities of a man's mind. To Balzac there was less distinction between a man and the clothes he wore than most of us feel. He glides without a jolt from neck-cloths to noses and from noses to personal habits, and from these to the most secret and cherished ideals of man's soul. In fact, there is sometimes more veracity and more talent, and more feeling indeed, in his descriptions of things than of persons. If it had been an inventory of the accessories which composed the external life of French society in his day that he had undertaken, there could be less question of the success of the *Human Comedy*.

And considering the many chances he had to blunder, it is astonishing how accurate his archaeological and historical statements generally are. His references to music and literature, however, carry little weight. And of course it must be understood that it is only of French affairs that Balzac speaks with anything like respectable knowledge.

When he comes to philosophize, our misgivings multiply. Leibnitz, Spinoza, Kant, are names which run trippingly from his pen, and in common politeness we take for granted that he has his bearings in philosophy, till he shakes his credit by mingling with them Lavater, Gall, Swedenborg, and Mesmer, on equal terms. And again, he too evidently talks "philosophy" to fill pages and impose on the credulous. When he would seek a yet more spiritual height and preens his feathers for the warm air and sunshine of religious discourse, then the reader may especially note the weakness of his wing. Nothing could be more grotesque than M. de Balzac thus anointing himself with what he terms "religious unction."

It is impossible, as I have said, to believe that Balzac's world is a true picture of French life in his day. If it were,

then French life must have been more dull and trivial, more sordid and ugly, than people commonly suppose. In Balzac's world there are few persons animated by high ideals or encouraged by great hopes; lust and avarice are by far the principal motives of action; morality is either mere good instinct or a shallow habit; manners are detestable; you never know when you shall turn a page and find some hero, whom the author has elaborately adorned with virtues, peeping through a keyhole or telling a cowardly lie. His provincial cities are the abodes of *ennui*. And his Paris, for all its agitation and its larger interests, is not the home of great-minded people.

In general, then, it must be said that Balzac's real deficiency is that he does not hold the balance fairly between good and evil. We have admired the vast extent of his intellectual powers, and we appreciate the fact that he was, within certain limits, splendidly faithful to his theory of realism, or naturalism; but there is a different kind of scope or comprehensiveness which we must admit he did not possess: he did not represent sufficiently the heights, as well as the depths and the expanse of human nature. His work responds well to any quantitative test, but not so well to a qualitative test. His figures are not equally well executed, of course. It would be expecting too much to ask that they should be. But it is not too much to ask that the natural balances and proportions of life should be preserved, especially as between good and evil. Balzac does not preserve this balance. He apparently takes more interest in the abnormal than in the normal, in the depraved than in the healthy, in the vicious than in the virtuous. In general, the selfish, scheming, money-loving, vain, extravagant, disingenuous people are in unnatural proportion numerically, and much better depicted too, than the loyal, the straightforward, the pure, the honest. We may indeed bring such an indictment against ourselves and against the whole world, as Hamlet brings

against himself: "I am myself indifferent honest: but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth?" But after all, "there is a soul of goodness in things evil," and we all exist and human society is preserved upon the conviction that there is more good than evil in the majority of men and women. While Balzac abounds in rascals, cheats, snobs, and shoddy persons of all sorts, he has created relatively fewer persons of real nobility and fineness of spirit.

In short, the *Human Comedy* is a huge undertaking surprisingly well accomplished, but the most surprising thing is that it should have been begun; and after all, in comparison with life itself, the result is meagre and false. No other novelist ever came so near doing the impossible; but all the talent, industry, and audacity in the world could not suffice for such a task.

Still, it is much to have attempted it. Mighty as the tower of Babel rose that structure of the mind; and to Balzac as to the dwellers on Shinar's plain, belongs the praise of having lifted his hand to a godlike emprise. Many of the stones of the imperfect edifice are in themselves perfect, and may be considered, perhaps to most advantage, as separate works of art. They are veracious, yet imaginative; they are always interesting, often beautiful, sometimes elevating. They are full of close observation and strong argument, and in many of them we feel the stir of large ideas.

Unfortunately Balzac was also the author of many inferior works, so far below his best and of so different a kind, that it is very important to distinguish them. In these he renounces temporarily his principles of realism and follows the seductions of romantic fancy. If we seek a



motive for such treason, we shall find one, I believe, in his desire for wealth and display. When the charlatan, the sensualist, the philistine, the *parvenu* awoke in Balzac, the noble artist that dwelt in him fled for the time in despair. It is a portentous revelation this, of irrepressible inferior forces breaking, like streams of mud and lava, through the fair, orderly, and fruitful flanks of Balzac's nature. The novels and short stories written under these impulses have had great popularity and unfortunately represent, to many readers, the true Balzac. But from every high point of view they are failures. For example, it is impossible to consider "Le Lys dans la Vallée" as either true or beautiful, and only a very sentimental reader can find it anything but dull. "Splendeurs et Misères" served its purpose when it enabled Balzac to buy gorgeous bric-a-brac. He must have laughed at the public which bought and read the book. "Beatrice," begun by a man of delicate feeling, was finished with a heavy and unscrupulous hand. The same meddling hand has introduced not a few pages and chapters of atrocious bad taste and dull sensationalism into fully one-half of the Human Comedy. An entire group of his characters, members of which recur again and again, is certainly false to observation. It includes most of his adventurers, many of his titled Parisians and people of fashion, many of his journalists, artists, and men of letters, many of his diplomatists, brokers, and bankers, and nearly all his elaborate police department. The novels, sketches, and tales in which these fabulous creatures carry on their intricate intrigues are too clever by far. They fail to carry conviction.

Balzac was not much more than half the time his best self. He had not always the sure touch of a master. He was often false to his own principles of art. He did not of necessity and with ease think like a man of fine feeling and clear moral sense, although he always professes to do so. But at times, and by taking thought, he could write not only



vigorously (he always did that) but with taste and truth. There is a world of difference between his worst and his best; not that his style changes, for it is singularly uniform; not that years brought maturity of mind, for his work from 1829 to 1839 is at least as excellent as what followed. The cause lies in the moral, rather than the intellectual part of the man. He was an unformed, unfinished character. Two natures contended in him for supremacy, the one snobbish, vulgar, ostentatious, unquiet, sensual, worshipping wealth and gaudy display, the other manly, just, brave, loving reality. Both natures possessed torrential power. Neither became complete master of his life. Under their alternating influence, he wrote detestably and perfectly.

It is interesting to know that Balzac conceived the Human Comedy and how far he executed his idea. Only by understanding how vast, how varied is this undertaking, can we appreciate his titanic nature. Still, all this would be mere matter of curiosity, or at best of psychological interest, were it not for the individual works in which his genius has found full and perfect expression—a genius unequalled by any other French novelist, and supported by a degree of industry seldom paralleled in the annals of literature. About two dozen of the greatest works of fiction in the French language constitute this splendid array.

It would be presumptuous to claim anything like finality for one's own choice. But so few persons read the whole of the Human Comedy, that one who had done it, or very nearly, may help beginners by giving his opinion. Of the novels, I consider the following to be the best, and I take the liberty of arranging them more or less in the order of my preference: "Eugénie Grandet," "César Birotteau," "Le Curé de Tours," "Le Père Goriot," "La Femme de Trente Ans," "Un Début dans la Vie," "La Rabouilleuse," "Les Paysans," "Le Colonel Chabert," "L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine," "Modeste Mignon," "Le Curé de Vil-

lage," "Le Médecin de Campagne." Of the short stories, I should choose: "Jésus-Christ en Flandre," "Un Épisode sous la Terreur," "Le Chef d'oeuvre inconnu," "La Messe de l'Athée," "L'Auberge rouge," "Le Réquisitionnaire," "El Verdugo," "Un Drame au Bord de la Mer."

In one or the other of these lists, many readers of Balzac would place one or more of the following: "La Peau de Chagrin," "La Grenadière," "Gobsec," "Une Passion dans le Désert," "La Recherche de l'Absolu," "Louis Lambert," and "Séraphita."

However, a representative idea of Balzac's best qualities may be gained by reading only "Eugénie Grandet," "Le Père Goriot," "Les Paysans." "Jésus-Christ en Flandre," "Un Épisode sans la Terreur," and "L'Auberge rouge."

Taking the larger list, of twenty-one works, I think it makes a more splendid artistic impression than the whole Human Comedy of which it is a part. No half dozen other French novelists, each bringing his best product, can present such an array of masterpieces. I am inclined to think that the sum total of either modern Italian or modern German fiction does not equal this list in originality, truth to life, intellectual power, interest, and beauty. In English literature, Jane Austen, while conveying probably a stronger sense of verisimilitude, is less varied, abundant, and striking; Trollope, with a more cohesive scheme of characters and environment, is entirely lacking in passion, which raises many a page of Balzac into the region of poetry; George Eliot, with a sense for morality beside which Balzac's ethics often appear crude and barbaric, is by no means his equal as a story-teller; Scott, with all his magnificent material and the comforting warmth which his generous spirit exhales, even Scott seems awkward and primitive in his method, compared with the great French realist; Hawthorne, far superior to Balzac in charm and delicacy, is not more subtle, and is comparatively narrow, cold in temperament, and intellectu-

ally meagre; Thackeray, more genial, more humorous, more humane, more lovingly attached to his characters, chooses these characters chiefly from one social caste, whereas Balzac ranges freely over the whole field of French life and manners; Dickens perhaps it is who, while surpassing Balzac in humor, most nearly equals him in variety and life-likeness.

Balzac has had faithful disciples in Russia. His influence has been potent for good there. Undoubtedly Turgenieff and Tolstoi are more consistent realists than he. I should say that his mantle fell upon them, rather than upon Flaubert, Daudet, or Zola.

Somehow, it does not occur to one to question Balzac's supremacy among French novelists. George Sand perhaps—we might for a moment consider the claims of George Sand. She is perhaps more attractive in her personality, and her style is richer, clearer, more beautiful, more French. She too possesses power. But she is a sentimentalist. She did not, half the time, report what she really saw of life, but gave such testimony as was in accordance with her own ideals and passions. Probably a stronger plea might be made for Dumas than for George Sand; but to discuss it, we should have to settle for ourselves the question whether sheer romance, detached from reality, belongs to an order of literature as high as that of the realistic novel.

Nevertheless, I, for my part, should be glad if two-thirds of the *Human Comedy* had never been written, and I should not think a person narrow or fanatical who might decline to read even the best third. One of the earliest, and certainly the bravest, of Balzac's critics, Eugène Poitou, wrote, in 1856: "On craint de se trouver pire quand on a lu Balzac." He might have added that one is sure to be less happy.

## W. C. BROWNELL

The highest function of criticism is to plan those reconstructions that are forever necessary. Matthew Arnold is as clear an example of the professional critic as England produced in the nineteenth century; and between him and other writers, his contemporaries, there was a difference, not so much of power as of position and intention. It was evident from the first that he was trying to create in the minds of his countrymen a certain order; his effort was to broaden the basis of their life and make a new arrangement of its elements,—in a word, to synthesize. The opportunity for synthesis was never more inviting anywhere than it is in America. Here and there we have accomplishment and character. But accomplishment with us is generally dislocated, and character starves for want of a sustaining *milieu*. We are a nation, but scarcely a society. Only now and again have we been effectively touched by the Time-spirit. The German *Aufklärung*, which was educational and theological, failed to enlighten our ancestors, who were still busy on the frontiers and occupied with political organization. The spirit of the French Revolution, a spirit as much social as political, aroused in our young cities a reaction partly religious, partly aristocratic. The historico-critical movement of the last generation in Europe dies when it touches our shore. Every age desires above all things to be interpreted to itself. If such an interpretation of the present age should be granted, it is to be feared that America must be left out of the reckoning. We have scarcely begun the work of analyzing and assessing our intellectual resources, a process which must go before synthesis.

It is my purpose to review the social and literary studies

of Mr. William Crary Brownell, a professional critic who has done much to sober our judgments of ourselves, and to make us see the achievements of our best writers in a perspective that may fairly be called cosmopolitan. I shall refer to his art criticism only as it appears to have enriched his equipment and modified his general attitude.

Twenty-one years have elapsed since the publication of his "French Traits," which is a study no less of American than of French life, and perhaps more safely based on the American side of the comparison. With the publication of his "French Art," in 1892, he gave evidence of highly specialized knowledge in a sphere of activity peculiarly exacting. Nine years later he gathered into a volume called "Victorian Prose Masters" his essays on Thackeray, Carlyle, George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, Ruskin, and Meredith. And between 1903 and 1900 he has published, in *Scribner's Magazine* and the *Atlantic Monthly*, essays on Hawthorne, Henry James, Cooper, Lowell, Poe, and Emerson, which he has expanded and reprinted as "American Prose Masters."

It is plainly not Mr. Brownell's chosen task to contribute directly to what would at the present time be the vain labor of synthesis. He commends no social philosophy. He is one of those who sow the seed of discontent. Such glimpses of his own view of life as he permits us to catch reveal a serene mind which has come to rest securely somewhere; but the effect of his criticism upon his readers is to dissolve false security. In artistic matters we are liable to accept the will for the deed, or at least the effort for the accomplishment. The tendency of our optimism is to overestimate the value of activity, of effectiveness, and to disregard the end. We exhort one another to be enthusiastic; but what is really important is that we should have worthy ideals. Loyalty is preached to us. But loyalty to what? We even hear it proclaimed that faith is in itself a virtue,



irrespective of its object. Plainly the first duty of a critic is to question the validity of what the world accepts as true, and the propriety of the world's tastes.

Mr. Brownell is a master of the art of making distinctions and testing accepted claims. To make distinctions and test claims involves either reference to some canon of value, or comparison with examples outside the ken or the sympathy of the ordinary observer. Precept may boast its converts, but example has the more primitive prestige, and has been a thousand times more often triumphant. Again, criticism can be applied from a point inside the circle of things judged, or from a point without. It can be implicated and standardized, or, on the other hand, detached and of protean form. Mr. Brownell's criticism is essentially undomestic, and although far from lawless it is not dogmatic. He realizes that a critical movement related closely to an American standard of taste and limited by an American horizon would be provincial, would be, above all, illusory.

If Mr. Brownell has not been pilloried by a patriotic press for his "French Traits," he may thank the successful complexity of his style; for the interest of this very candid book, to American readers, lies in its comments on us, and the victory in its war of contrasts falls almost uniformly to France. The French, he says, have accepted the results of the Revolution. They are loyally attached to democratic principles, which they are endeavoring, with characteristic devotion to logic, to apply in detail. One fundamental doctrine of the Revolution is that it shall never cease, because change means health. "How idle it is," he exclaims, "to commiserate them for their instability, when not stability but flux is their ideal." Another leading doctrine of French democracy is that not precedent but reason—contemporary, practical reason—shall be the criterion of movement. "The revolutionary spirit," he tells us, "is the re-

forming and revising instinct.' . . . It has invariably a programme." The application of ideas to life, notably of these two master ideas, is with the French but little obstructed by cant and false sentiment. They trust their principles, and are not afraid to see them at work. What is rational has the best possible guarantee of safety.

Democracy in France, thus loyally recognized and put to use, has become a network of channels by means of which the naturally strong social instinct of the French race has poured itself over the entire field of their life. In France, society is the measure of all things. This fact is in itself a liberation from many forms of narrowness and meanness. It enlarges the national mind, elevates the individual towards and even above the level of the whole, and rationalizes patriotism. Hence the French, despite their proverbial self-satisfaction, their disinclination to travel, their indifference to what is foreign, are not really provincial. Hence, too, art and manners flourish supremely well in France. Art flourishes, because it is a distinguished branch of public service; manners flourish, because human respect is of their essence.

By way of contrast, Mr. Brownell represents Americans as untrue to their profession of democracy, as inheriting the English empirical habit instead of obeying the dictates of reason, and as suffering from the provincial crudeness that results, in a republic, from hampering the social instinct. Among the preventable causes of our unintelligence and bad manners, there is, he argues, at least this very important one, that our theory of democracy is in large part a pretense.

We are perhaps painfully conscious of our minor faults. To be told that they are not being overcome because we have lost faith in the principles of democracy,—that our manners and our art would be more distinguished if equality were in fact, and not merely in half-hearted profession, our political and social ideal,—this is the new and salutary les-

son. Not as we are provincial, but as we are false, do we come behind the French in the art of living. And certainly provincialism, in its own awkward way, has done something to supply color and variety, the lack of which in America depresses foreign observers.

The structural lines in "Victorian Prose Masters" are simple and important, but are likely to be overlooked by a reader whose attention is absorbed by the bewildering multiplicity of views which the book contains. The number of these views, and still more their subtlety, incline one at first to consider them the result of extreme cleverness. But nothing could be more unfair than to regard Mr. Brownell as a clever thinker. He shows himself everywhere ready to sacrifice mere point for the sake of justness, to disregard, for example, the danger of being obscure or of seeming to be commonplace. Obscure he sometimes is, and stands in so far without excuse, but really commonplace he never is. In spite of a superficial appearance to the contrary, these essays are not groups of witty but inconsequential "good things," like Mr. Birrell's "Obiter Dicta," nor are they a parade of learning and legerdemain, as some of Lowell's essays unquestionably are,—prodigal and even prodigious in their cleverness, and a display of pedantry, however delightful. What distinguishes Mr. Brownell is something quite incompatible with the desire to shine. This is, it seems to me, his power of restraining and directing a naturally emotional nature by a spirit of judicial coolness. A philosophy, neither vague nor yet obtrusively declared, lies behind these studies, and accounts for their fundamental simplicity. But what concerns us here is the simplicity of Mr. Brownell's method. It is easily possible to apprehend the central thought in each essay. For he is in so far a disciple of Taine that he always delves for the master-trait.

Extraordinary force, self-consciousness, and willfulness, Mr. Brownell marks as the most salient traits of Carlyle. "He did not know what love is." "His mind monopolized his feeling."

"It is his thinking, not himself, that is agitated." Is it not possible that Mr. Brownell was still too much affected by the long-time obsessing "*Reminiscences*," when he wrote in this strain? Is it not a little petulant to complain that Carlyle was not *good*, an implication that pervades Mr. Brownell's essay, and to note with disapproval Carlyle's way of obtruding into criticism and history a body of doctrine, which is judged to be rather exiguous after all? For we must take genius as we find it, and a self-effacing, quiet-mannered, disinterested Carlyle would be no Carlyle at all. Whether we disapprove or not of applying the spirit and method of poetry to philosophical and historical subjects, to such subjects as are treated in "*Sartor Resartus*," "*Cromwell*," and "*Past and Present*," Carlyle specifically works with a poet's purpose and in a poet's manner, by an inner light which is nothing other than personality.

Mr. Brownell, I think, occupies himself too much with Carlyle's origins and temperament, and takes too little account of what Sainte-Beuve calls "a certain contrary," the supplementary and often inconspicuous qualities that count in rounding out a character. Yet there can be no dissentient voice to the judgment which finds excess and caprice to be Carlyle's most crying defects. Nor is Mr. Brownell too severe when he notes "the plebeian antagonism to democracy that leads him to consider the spirit of the time as negligible except as incarnated in the hero." And he is stating an obvious truth when he declares that the two supreme influences of the nineteenth century "found in Carlyle an instinctive and deliberate antagonist: science he neglected, democracy he decried." A much too drastic inference is, however, drawn from this fact, in a passage from which, to represent it fairly, I must make a long citation: "To be out of harmony with one's time and environment is a heavy handicap on energy, which is thus inevitably deflected instead of developed, however it may be intensified by isolation. It is inherently inimical to expansion, and Carlyle may really be said to have devoted his prodigious powers to the endeavor

to transform the 'epoch of expansion' in which he passed his life into an 'epoch of concentration,' to adopt Arnold's terminology. Unaided, or aided only by the futile of the intellectual world, the Froudes, the Kingsleys, the Ruskins, such an attempt must be both transitory and incomplete."

It is to the major premise of this syllogism that I take exception, namely, that revolt against one's time and environment is a handicap on energy and inimical to expansion. Rather it is a generator of energy and a mode of expansion. Undoubtedly Carlyle reacted against the scientific and democratic free-thought which was in the end to prevail. Undoubtedly his efforts were not crowned with direct success. But as we look back now upon the fifty years that lie between 1815 and 1865, it seems to be a period marked as deeply by its reactions as by its forward movements. And while specifically reactionary,—but, be it said, not therefore necessarily futile,—the animating spirit of Carlyle's lifework, and its contagious principle, was independence. He wrought upon the youth of his time, not as Newman and Ruskin wrought, in the interest of mediævalism, but all for modernism. He did not underestimate the volume and momentum of the positive movement, the movement of expansion. If he attempted prematurely to synthesize, he limited, of course, his reputation as a prophet, but he also vindicated the immunities of individual thought and feeling. This was his contribution to the side of expansion. Perhaps he was thus more useful to it than if he had joined the hue and cry of optimists who proclaimed that all would soon be well in Zion.

One of the futile of the intellectual world—this is the clue to Mr. Brownell's delving for the master-trait of Ruskin. As in the case of Carlyle, he finds it to be a too confident release of personality, or, to look upon the matter from another point, a too unquestioning reliance upon the inner light. Ruskin was characterized by the "predominance of the emotional



sense over the thinking power." He was "a pure sentimental-ist." It is unusual and perhaps salutary to behold Ruskin treated with a complete lack of reverence by one who is as free as possible from the bondage of philistinism. He is treated, of course, without a trace of levity, in this case. Mr. Brownell leaves him little except a wonderful, though unclassical and vitiated style, philanthropic motives, and the distinction of having been "the most attentive, the most affectionate, the most eloquent, the most persuasive apostle of nature." He denies him any fitness to write about art; "he neither recognized its limitations, nor acquiesced in its office, nor apprehended its distinction." Naturally this contention opens the way to a treatment of the claims of art for art's sake, and the respective demands of the senses and of reason, including morals and utility, in contemplating works of art. And nowhere are Mr. Brownell's judicial fairness and the generous maturity of his spirit better shown than in this debate.

Again, he finds Ruskin's social and economic preaching futile. But we should not judge too pragmatically the foiled searchers, the shocked reactionaries, of the Victorian period. As Carlyle's prophecies made, in the long run, for independence and for strength of will, so I believe Ruskin's rhapsodies made, on the whole, for truthfulness, and that too in a sphere with which Englishmen were indisposed to associate the idea of truthfulness at all. Art meant nothing to Ruskin except as it illustrated nature or edified man. These two objectives Ruskin kept steadily in view, not only in his art criticism, but equally in his economic exhortations; and I see no reason to hold that the moment was ill-chosen for preaching truth to nature, and utility to the whole man, as criteria in art and politics.

Arnold is a classic, in a sense in which Ruskin and Carlyle are not. He is a classic because of the unfailing harmony between his impulses, his equipment, his object, and his medium. If to a certain class of minds he makes but an ineffectual ap-

peal, a class of minds that require above all a forcible impact, and generally an obviously emotional one, the cause is perhaps disclosed in what Mr. Brownell acutely finds to be the formula of his harmony, namely, that "he directed his nature, as well as he directed his work, in accordance with the definite ideal of reason." Readers of the very numerous class to which I refer associate the idea of literary genius not so much with definiteness and with reason, as with power, somewhat vaguely composed and irresponsibly set in motion.

More and more the preëminence of Arnold among English critics is coming to be acknowledged, because time is bringing into relief the soundness of his views, the sincerity of his purpose, and the excellence of his style. "The critical sense is so far from frequent," says Mr. Henry James, "that it is absolutely rare, and that the possession of the cluster of qualities that minister to it is one of the highest distinctions. It is a gift inestimably precious and beautiful." Mr. James appears to regard curiosity and sympathy, quickness to appreciate and take fire, in a word, sensitiveness to impressions, as the mistress of these qualities. But if, as Mr. Brownell affirms, Arnold stands alone among English critics, he does so because his whole nature was symmetrically cultivated, and because no other has "his faculty of extracting their application from the precedents indicated by culture."

The most effective service of Mr. Brownell's essay is to explain the nature and resources of Arnold's art as a critic, and to place in a true light his theological writings. Arnold's criticism is not impressionistic, not "the irresponsible exercise of the nervous system, however attuned to taste and sensitized by culture." It has behind it a body of doctrine. I wish I could agree with Mr. Brownell in thinking that Arnold almost escaped the perils of didacticism, that he had an eminent gift for seeing things as they really are, and for penetrating the personalities of other men. It seems to me that in none of these respects was he conspicuously well endowed by nature,

and that his distinction lies simply in the centrality, the classical quality of his culture, and in the art by which he applied its lessons. For example, one cannot be sure that his picture of Falkland is a true picture. His achievement in this case is to have been guided by his culture to find an historical figure who could, by an infusion of his own purpose, be made to serve as a rebuke to our age. Culture determined his choice of a figure, as it opened his eyes to the evil of contentiousness and a warlike spirit. His art showed itself in the cunning simplicity with which he composed the picture, in the deft turn of its application, and in his pure and memorable language.

In like manner, it was the centrality of his culture, his success, partly from fortune and partly from careful habit, in keeping close to the best line of tradition and yet free of access to the *Zeitgeist*, that enabled him so early among men of English speech to see that the vital quality of Christianity depends not on prophecy, nor on miracles, nor on metaphysics. He never underestimated the distinctive features of Christianity, though as a humanist he was incapable of exaggerating them. Mr. Brownell admirably says: "Nearly the whole thinking world, save that portion of it committed to the defense of dogma, has practically, if insensibly, come to adopt his view that the sanction of religion is its natural truth." When we ask ourselves what theory or what faculty drew him to the study of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, acquainted him with Renan, impelled him to an attitude of discipleship toward Sainte-Beuve and Schérer, and turned him to the contemporary German exponents of the critico-historical method, we shall be perhaps no further advanced. The simple fact is that his education opened these lines to him and enabled him to see their correlation. No one exercised a more direct and practical influence upon him than Sainte-Beuve, to whom he was indebted for at least half of the subjects treated in the original edition of "Essays in Criticism." And of Sainte-Beuve also it may be said that his

master quality was the generality of his literary and historical culture, uniting and covering all salient traits.

Mr. Brownell's theory of criticism derives from Taine; his manner, in so far as it is not original, derives from Mr. Henry James. Naturally therefore he seems less conscious of the peculiarities of Mr. James's manner than of his theory. It is not surprising that the subtlest element in his essay on Mr. James is his comment on the doctrine of "disinterestedness," of which Mr. James is so distinguished an adept. "It is," remarks Mr. Brownell, "not precise enough to say that Mr. James's mind is essentially critical, and that therefore his attitude is essentially detached. There are two sufficiently distinct varieties of the critical mind, the philosophical and the scientific. Mr. James's is the latter. . . . So far as fiction is a criticism of life, it is so because it exhibits a philosophy of life, in general or in some particular. It is far more the scientific habit of viewing life and its phenomena that Mr. James illustrates." This penetrating statement goes far to account for Mr. James's aridity, and to justify the very general opinion that his art savors too much of virtuosity. To be disinterestedly curious—if anybody can be so indeed—is felt not to be an interesting attitude. This is the measure of the immense sacrifice Mr. James makes to his theory. While Mr. Brownell eminently appreciates Mr. James's achievement, he manages, with much fine discrimination, to express a profound misgiving as to the direction he has pursued.

The literary work of James Russell Lowell has never before been subjected to a perfectly unflinching analysis. The brightness of his personal charm has hitherto made scrutiny blink. Mr. Brownell, in an essay which is as direct and simple as the essay on Mr. James is perplexed, reaches a conclusion in regard to Lowell's prose which is as just as it is disillusioning. "The critical temperament is a reflective one," he says; and Lowell was "temperamentally energetic, but reflectively indolent." Starting from this remark, which is nothing if not

clairvoyant, it would be possible, though ungracious to a rich personality which is yet a living memory, to insist upon the unsatisfactory elements of Lowell's essays, their wearying crackle of puns and quotations, their baffling want of composition, their aimless force and ineffectual fire, their purely literary inspiration. Given a superlatively energetic temperament and the bubbling humor of Mr. Lowell, both insufficiently restrained by reflection, and we have too often a tiresome smartness. In this, as well as in some of his noblest qualities, he was more typically a New Englander than a representative American. Quick, sententious, conclusive, not to say specious and dogmatic, the New England mind outruns the slower wits of the "average American." It is only after an interval that one perceives the cause of a vague, but very real, sense of discomfort in reading Lowell: it is that one has been too smartly dealt with. Mr. Brownell judges Lowell's poetry very favorably. His praise of the "Commemoration Ode" seems even extravagant, and is not justified by the stanza he quotes and challenges the world to match.

One of the most honorable opportunities that can come to a man must be that of recalling to public attention the value and interest of a writer whose fame has begun to suffer an undeserved decline, especially if this neglect has been due primarily to the censorious, who have despised the verdict of the humble. To read Mr. Brownell's remarks on Cooper's "massive and opulent work" is very pleasant. But it seems to me that he does not really base his high estimate on a relish for Cooper's romances as romances, but rather on extraneous considerations. He finds Cooper manly, and a knower of men. He finds him well-informed and sound in judgment. He praises his aversion to sectionalism, and his preference of Episcopacy as compared with the newer sects of his day. Cooper's vision embraced the whole country, and his sympathies were for what was not most conservative, most productive of amenity, and most comforting



to a craving for historic continuity. His politics, we are told, were "rational, discriminating, and suggestive," and he was a great publicist. Mr. Brownell also regards Cooper as a fertile creator of characters. Thus far it is possible to agree with him. But not until it has been shown that Cooper's style is a facile and charming medium, will it appear likely that people beyond the age of twenty will read him with the interest his large outlook and historical position in themselves deserve.

Hawthorne evidently exasperates Mr. Brownell, and the resulting essay is the least engaging and the least convincing in the volume. Still, no other more impressively demonstrates the critic's power of psychological analysis. It is his most elaborate study. The disintegration proceeds over the entire surface of Hawthorne's character and of his work, as if some vigorous plant were insinuating its myriad tentacles into the crevices of a wall. The results are as follows:

Hawthorne cultivated his fancy to the neglect of his imagination; and he neglected his imagination because he shrank from reality. By nature he was hard-headed, and a lynx-eyed observer, but he made, in his novels, little or no use of his faculty for seeing things as they are. His mysticism was not temperamental, but deliberate and cold-blooded. Even when he was at work with real objects, his preference for allegory led him to symbolical expression. "The insubstantiality he sought was to consist in the envelope, not in the object," but he ended by "evaporating both." Being prone to reverie, he was not energetically reflective, and he had very little to brood over. Being self-centred, he applied the measure of his own tastes even to painting and sculpture, of which he knew next to nothing, and even to history, to which he was indifferent. "The value of culture, even to a writer of pure romance," is proved by the fact that "he succeeded in the main when he dealt with the Puritans, and almost invariably failed when he did not;" for

the early life of New England was the only period he had studied. "There he had a background, material, and a subject of substance." When he traveled abroad, his frame of mind was not unlike that of our "humorists," who, in their favorite phrase, find "nothing that can beat God's Country." Being a fatalist, he blandly considered that his genius had been once for all delivered to him and was not to be diverted, enlarged, or transformed. From the influences of culture "he protected himself with signal perversity and success. His imagination was not nurtured, because his mind was not enriched. . . . Hawthorne"—and here is Mr. Brownell's most cruel discovery—"cared nothing for people in life and made extraordinarily little of them in his books. In no other fiction are the characters so little characterized as in his, where in general their *raison d'être* is what they illustrate, not what they are."

I suppose Mr. Brownell deserves our gratitude for expressing these negations, which in themselves are true. But his two or three pages of praise for "The Scarlet Letter"—"our one prose masterpiece," he calls it—by no means restore the balance or exhaust all the good that might be said of Hawthorne. Much indeed ought to have been said about that noble severity, that unity of tone, which denote Hawthorne's mastery of himself and of his material, such as it is, in more than one or two of his romances. Mr. Brownell has made no confident attempt to explain the sources of Hawthorne's undeniable fascination. To say that his fame is kept alive by national superstition, by his being part of the required reading of youth and the indulgent memory of maturity, is to despise the judgment of many competent readers and the general opinion. It is not "letting the world judge." Absolutely correct as is the general theory that the substance even of romance should be real, we may still contemplate with admiration the result achieved by an artist working with defective material. Hawthorne is perhaps our only classic. No element of literary art is so preservative as its medium, and Haw-

thorne's style has the clearness, the refinement, the elevation, the sufficiency, and the restraint of classic style.

These were qualities of his nature, too. His detachment; which kept him aloof from his surroundings, saved him from contemporary vagaries. His rare and pure genius, which shut him off from the sympathy of prying neighbors, whether philosophers or common village intruders, has lifted him into companionship with thousands who are, perhaps perversely, satisfied with a less rigorous definition of fiction than that it shall be invariably a criticism of life based upon observation. They imagine at least that the dreams of Hawthorne are a kind of experience.

With Poe the case is different. His dreams are not so certainly as Hawthorne's the play of a sound and candid mind. Nor do his writings, whether prose or verse, possess the warrant of an invariably excellent style. The tales had the good luck to accord with a taste for horrors and extravagance, and a taste for decorative description, that flourished for a while in France. That they obtained a considerable vogue throughout Europe is not particularly significant, for it was thus they obtained it. We have in this matter thought too much of "European recognition." We shall do better to judge Poe's tales for what they are. There is no denying that through sectional incompatibility Poe never had sympathy and support from his contemporaries in New England. If he is now the object of a cult, it is the *revanche*. On any other grounds a Poe cult would be absurd. But nothing is less absurd than the instinct to right a wrong.

Mr. Brownell's temperate article has provoked many a hot controversy. But what does he really say? He declares that Poe was "the solitary artist of our elder literature," and endeavors to establish this high claim—too high, when we remember Irving and Hawthorne—by strict attention to Poe's technic. He avoids what Poe's admirers tremblingly deprecate: he never confuses the technical and the moral.

But of course the two cannot be kept apart when the choice of subject, or any one of several other essentials, comes to be considered. And I fancy that the first words that give umbrage occur when he says that Poe's "most characteristic limitation as an artist is the limited character of the pleasure he gives." The question of technic disposed of, he makes bold to declare that the effect of Poe's personality is always unpleasant, that he was fascinated by the false, and that his tales lack substance. They have, he tells us, no human interest, because humanity did not in the least interest Poe. And fiction without human characters is, to say the least, abnormal. It is difficult to see how any one can gainsay all this. Yet to accept it is to reject almost every claim for Poe as a prose-writer.

The fact is that the intellectual life of America in Poe's time was too meagre to provide sufficient substance for the imagination, which deals with reality, and both Poe and Hawthorne were thrown back upon the fancy, which feeds on a more vapory diet. And Poe, though perhaps more ambitious to achieve direct artistic effects than Hawthorne, was less disciplined and consequently less cultured. Hawthorne, moreover, as Mr. Brownell has pointed out, was only negatively perverse; he simply did not turn his face toward life. Poe's perversity was positive and acute; he falsified life.

Two little poems, haunting, melodious, will long preserve Poe's name, the lines "To Helen," and "To One in Paradise." The name of Lovelace has been borne down to us from the seventeenth century on two such azure wings. That he will share the literary fate of Lovelace is possibly the most we can hope for Poe. And the famous cavalier songs, be it observed, come closer home to common sympathy, while not less elevated in feeling or elegant in form than Poe's two pieces of magic.

It is to be regretted that in his latest essay, on Emerson, Mr. Brownell's ordonnance or composition is as complex as in his earlier works, and that his style makes the same severe

demands on the reader. He rarely appeals to the eye and never to the ear. He has no instinct for metaphor. No writer of his class is so abstruse. It may well be a matter of principle with Mr. Brownell to address himself only to the judicious, to utter his inmost thought regardless of the unintelligent; but an abstraction invariably gains by being precipitated into sensuous language, and it is often surprising how a complicated statement can be simplified without the loss of anything worth saving. One is puzzled to surmise what Mr. Brownell really thinks about Emerson. The essay opens with exaggeration and ends in faint denial.

There are some contradictory personalities who must be treated trenchantly, even at the risk of incompleteness. Arnold's incisive and consistent lecture remains in memory as one of the possible views of Emerson, while Mr. Brownell's complex of cross-lights is already dim when one has read the last page. Singleness, one would think, was Emerson's most winning trait. It was also, of course, his most serious limitation. Mr. Brownell perceives both aspects of this quality. Furthermore, he calls attention to the predominance in Emerson of pure intellect. These are the main lines of his essay. Valuable as are the many secondary thoughts, they should not have been allowed to obscure these.

In so far, he departs from his general practice. For if I were asked what Mr. Brownell's own master-trait was, I should reply, a trained desire, perhaps originally an instinct, but now certainly a disciplined instinct, to estimate details with regard to the wholes that they help to constitute; or, in brief, a sense of relative values. His mind belongs to the small family of the resolutely judicial, not of the legal, but of the equitable type, who see truth as an artist sees his material, with a primary regard for congruity and proportion.

If he has a body of doctrine, its first tenet is the now almost undisputed one that literature is valuable in proportion to the amount and quality of effective truth it conveys.



With him realism is fundamental. He seeks in plastic and in literary art their significance, their expression; but he takes for granted, with not so much as a question, that the only sound basis is experiential reality.

And another principle with him is the duty of accepting and rationalizing the immense fund of optimism that is one of our national assets. His work is often destructive, but always in the interest, and in a spirit, of cheerfulness. His standards are not of this year; yet what he cares most for is the present. "To an intelligence fully and acutely alive," he says, "its own time must, I think, be more interesting than any other."

He is not so devoted to the ideal of detachment that he does not, upon occasion, perform an act of taste; and to perform an act of taste, as Sainte-Beuve remarked, requires courage. At least in a critic so modest and withal so honest as Mr. Brownell it requires courage.

His methods are painstaking in the extreme, and his manner is often recondite and difficult; yet there is nothing esoteric in his aim or in his substance. "The business of intelligent criticism," he avows, "is to be in touch with everything." And yet he holds fast to these principles, not with the inhuman and almost inconceivable "disinterestedness" of which we hear so much, but with the very evident patriotic purpose of promoting centrality and urbanity of taste.

## WORDSWORTH AT BLOIS

Young aspirants after scholarly fame are wont to speak with bated breath of "original research" and to write about their own efforts to discover truth either in a grimly impersonal style or with excessive personalities, in the fighting sense of the word. Give me the unripe philologist, above all men, for that kind of seriousness. The collation of manuscripts appears to exercise a peculiarly destructive effect upon humility and good-nature. Composing textual notes will sometimes bring out latent asperities in a character not otherwise noticeable for stiffness.

Mindful of these observations, which I had been storing up for some years, I went about a little task of my own, a few summers ago, with the distinct understanding that I should try to get as much fun and romance out of it as possible. It had to be performed, but I would not be over-sanguine as to the result and thus heat my blood to the point of acerbity.

I was living two miles from Blois, in the verdurous plain on the other side of the Loire. My business took me almost every day to the Château; and when I compared my actual impressions of that edifice and of the town below and around it with the images left in my memory from reading the "Vicomte de Bragelonne" before the winter fire at home, I realized that I should have to try very hard indeed to find romance. I had pictured Blois as a black precipitous mass of houses, dominated entirely by the great palace whence issued those peals of argentine laughter which Dumas so joyously describes. And instead of all this, the general color of the city, as seen from over the river, was a faded lavender, the site did not look very steep, and the Château wore an

almost cosy and bourgeois air, as if it had settled down for a peaceful future with the surrounding houses, on the understanding that the past should never be mentioned. Nor was there much fun in plodding along the glaring hot highroad and toiling up the streets, which proved steep enough when it came to that.

A climb of sixty steps between blank walls, then a dazed stagger across a sun-beaten square, and I pass under the gilt equestrian statue of Louis XII, into the Château. There, lodged in truly royal apartments, is the Municipal Library. The obliging custodian, his assistant, and three or four old ladies and gentlemen are seated round an enormous table, and presently I join them, as if to partake of the same banquet. But they are consuming Bergson and the latest reviews, while my fare is a huge manuscript volume of records, the minutes of a Revolutionary Society, *Les Amis de la Constitution*.

When one has crossed the ocean to read the unique copy of a particular book, and the Library which contains it is open only a few hours in the afternoon, there is much excitement in being on time, beginning work promptly, and holding out till the last moment. For the first quarter of an hour one enjoys a delightful sense of coolness and tempered light and physical repose, after the glaring heat through which one has hurried. One is conscious, in a dozen ways, of one's surroundings, conscious too of well-being and of opportunity attained. Then the mind begins to grip and the senses correspondingly relax attention. One is no longer in the present, or even in the flesh. The hours pass unnoticed, until, at twenty minutes to six, a fear of awakening steals into the brain. A quick glance at the clock, a feeling of bewildered doubt, a determination to use every remaining second,—these are the first stages of the end. Then those twenty minutes! How the eye leaps from line to line! How the stiffening fingers scribble and scramble, abbreviating, running words

together, never hesitating! Rising giddily at last, one is astonished to see the librarian still placid. "A demain, Monsieur le bibliothécaire!" "Au revoir, Monsieur! Mais, il pleut; vous allez être attrapé par l'orage!" "Ca m'est égal," I reply and nonchalantly decline his offer of an umbrella. What do I care for a wetting, or for all this living world of little things like that? My mind is beating with the life of other times, and I have no bodily sensations at all. As I pass out beneath the gilded equestrian statue of Louis XII, I say to myself, in a subconscious parenthesis: "You no longer look dignified to me. You know and I know that you were taken down one day in disgrace. I wonder who set you up again." By the time I have crossed the square, an immense and exceedingly pleasant weariness brings me back to myself, and the figures of the past become less insistent.

Perhaps what I found in the old minute-book will not appear as interesting to my readers here as it did to me in those surroundings. For me, in the place itself, it quite transfigured and repopulated Blois. What I read in those pages, to which I returned day after day, gave me a fresh conception of the popular, humane, and enlightened character of the French Revolution before invading armies awoke the Terror. I received an impression that, so far as one town at least was concerned, the movement was spontaneous, open for the most part in its workings, and generous in its aim.

The Society of the Friends of the Constitution was one of many political clubs that sprang into being, all over France, at the opening of the Revolution. It met at first in the abbey of St. Laumer and afterwards in the church of the Jacobins, both having been secularized, of course. It appears to have been more or less affiliated with that other club sitting in the Jacobin monastery in Paris, and one of its objects was to be to the Municipal Council of Blois what the Paris club was to the Convention, a prod, or, as a friend of mine has called it, a "blower." It served also for the spread and discus-

sion of political news. It kept in touch with the Legislative Assembly, receiving its commissioners and executing some of its orders. It assisted in the work of recruiting soldiers. It educated the townspeople in Revolutionary doctrine and gave direction to public opinion. And, more especially in '93, it fell in with the sinister fashion of denouncing enemies of the republic. I believe one victim of its zeal was guillotined, but not at Blois itself. The club was formed by combining two others, from one of which it inherited its name, and from the other its motto, "*Vivre libre ou mourir.*" The mayor of Blois announced to the town council, on January 29, 1791, that "the municipality ought to encourage associations of this kind and authorize a device which all true patriots wear in their hearts, and furthermore the National Assembly has recognized that these associations are able to enlighten the people as to the benefits which its sage decrees are preparing to provide."

The most eminent personality in Blois before the Revolution was the bishop of the diocese, Monsignor de Thémines. He had been replaced by the great constitutional bishop, Grégoire, one of the leaders of the clergy who went over to the *tiers état* at Versailles in 1789 and now one of the most prominent members of the legislature. Grégoire, the son of poor peasants, and a man no less democratic in conduct than in principles, lived with becoming simplicity, occupying only a single room on the third floor of the episcopal palace. Like many other leaders of the Revolution, he was young, only thirty-six when he entered upon his complex duties at Blois, but he had already played an important rôle at Paris, where both in the Jacobin club and in the National Assembly, he had urged extreme democracy, while yet defending rational Christianity.

On the 13th of November, 1791, at five o'clock in the evening, a delegation from the Patriotic Society, accompanied by a multitude of their fellow-citizens, went to the episcopal palace to fetch "Monseieur Grégoire" to their place of meeting.



The scene is described in H. de Montreuil's "Blois pendant la Période révolutionnaire." The hall, we are there told, was brilliantly lighted, and adorned with garlands and with flower-crowned busts of the great Mirabeau and the philosopher Jean Jacques. When the bishop entered, all the spectators, enchanted and deeply moved, maintained at first the most profound silence, but soon, awakened by the beloved air of "Ca ira," they made the arches echo with shouts of "Long live Grégoire!" At six o'clock the meeting was thrown open and Monsieur the bishop, who had been elected president by acclamation, was about to take the chair, when a young patriot, carried by two grenadiers of the national guard, placed a crown of oak leaves on his brow.

Eleven months later, a name of ill omen appears for the first time in the minute-book of the "Friends of the Constitution." At the session of Friday, the 16th of December, third era of liberty (1791), the presiding officer reads an address "sent by our brothers sitting in the Jacobin monastery in Paris, which, by its energetic style, shows the sure and incorruptible soul of its author (one Roberspierre)." Less than a month later, another address by Robespierre is mentioned, and this time his name is spelled correctly. The reputation of the "incorruptible one" had outsped orthography.

I encountered a slight reluctance on the part of persons now living at Blois to admit that their ancestors belonged to the club. Blois is now a quiet town, *bien pensant* and conservative. It supports a newspaper which has for its mission to prove that most of the evils in the modern world, and especially its revolutions, whether French, Portuguese, Turkish, Persian, Chinese, or Russian, have been caused by the secret machinations of Jews and Free-Masons. I found the atmosphere of the old registers more exhilarating, and came to the conclusion that the Blésois might do worse than to honor the memory of their enlightened and wide-awake, though no doubt sometimes misguided, great-grandfathers.

The enrollment of the club was large and of course varied much from year to year. I counted about one hundred and eighty names in a manuscript list preserved among the archives of the department of Loir et Cher. The ages were given, and ranged from youth to eld. All classes and many occupations were represented. The list included several ecclesiastics. Some of the leading members of the club were also important town-officials.

On the whole, the society, while animated with the most uncompromising zeal for democracy, equality, and the rights of man, preserved a moderate tone. It appears to have sided with the Girondins, and its hero at Paris was not Robespierre, but Brissot. Of course, there was always the danger of fanaticism, connected with the prevailing dread of foreign invasion. A wave of such terror seems to have struck Blois on June 4, 1792, and it was then felt that all internal obstacles to the execution of the will of the people should be removed, and that an army must be raised and sent to the frontier. I noticed under that date the ominous mention of a "comité clandestin," in the society. Doubtless some desperate deeds were done, some examples of "direct action" given. But in general the work was educational. Month after month, sessions were held every evening, with singing of patriotic songs, recitation of patriotic poems, debates on abstruse and academic questions, speeches by members, and the reading of addresses from Paris and other cities.

For example, March 21, 1792, "when the meeting was called to order a stranger asked permission to declaim some verses against refractory priests. The society, after listening with pleasure, decided that its committee on benevolence should give help to the author, who was indigent." April 6, "a discourse was read in which the society at Lorient informs us of a brilliant festival held there, at which the English, American, and Polish flags were placed beside the French flag, which was ornamented with a tricolor ribbon. Roundly applauded."

Mention is made of "civic songs, stamped with the seal of civism." Under certain limitations, the public were admitted to the regular meetings. There was a ladies' gallery, and music by "*nos soeurs*" is occasionally mentioned. On Sundays and fête-days special educational or religious exercises were held. Subjects were prepared beforehand and written across the top of a sheet of paper. Persons who desired to speak wrote their names in the columns under the subjects of their choice. Speeches that had been particularly relished on ordinary days were repeated on these grand occasions. The favorite topics were Taxation, the National Guard, the Rights of Man, Slavery, the Administration of Public Charities, etc.

Once the society proudly "welcomed to its bosom" two bishops, Grégoire and a fellow-Jacobin of Paris, and that day it was proposed to establish a newspaper and to collect in one place the libraries of "reformed houses" in Blois, i. e., of sequestrated monasteries. Bishop Grégoire offered one of the rooms in his palace for this purpose. The Municipal Library today is largely indebted for its existence to this measure.

The "reformed houses" were many. Before the Revolution there were twelve monastic establishments at Blois, seven for men and five for women. As Bergevin and Dupré remark, in their history of the town, these gave a severe aspect to the place, with their high walls, their iron gates, and their vast enclosures, which resembled cemeteries. They cast a gloom over whole neighborhoods. The religious orders formed a population apart, a city within the city. "This isolated class," they continue, "was more numerous and wealthy at Blois than elsewhere, in proportion to the size of the place." The population of Blois was only about twelve thousand. The religious orders also possessed much other urban property, besides ground-rents and farm lands. Bishop Thérmines suppressed the monastery of the Cordeliers, and the National Assembly suppressed the others.

"The Marseillaise" is mentioned for the first time, October 1, 1792, as follows: "The receipt of some songs from Citizen Rochejean caused a desire to hear them. Citizen \_\_\_\_\_ asked for the hymn of the Marseillais, which was then sung by certain citizens. This hymn, which combines a delicious music with the merit of its versification, produced a very great effect." On October 13, "Brother \_\_\_\_\_ requests that we write to Paris for the score of the hymn of the Marseillais." On October 14, "The meeting was concluded with the hymn of the Marseillais, which is always heard with fresh pleasure. It is to propagate this pleasure that brother Billaute, a generous republican, has offered to the society five hundred copies of this patriotic hymn." On October 16, it was decreed that "tutoiement," or the use of the second person singular in address, should be observed; and one hundred of "our sisters" sang the hymn of the Marseillais.

Just as the Jacobins of Paris were exercising a fatal control over the government of that city, so the Friends of the Constitution influenced the government of Blois. Turning to the record-book of the Municipal Council, I found that among its score or so of members there were always about half a dozen whose names occur often as officers of the society. On August 20, 1792, the Council ordered the destruction of the equestrian statue of Louis XII which stood above the principal gate of the Château. This did not suffice, nor indeed was the order properly executed, and the society, on August 18, decided to "ask the municipality to efface all armorial bearings, to destroy the royal effigy which is over the gate of the Château, and to replace *louis le dernier* [no capitals] by the declaration of the rights of man." On August 24, 1792, appears the new formula "Fourth year of Liberty, first of Equality."

Fascinated as I was by this drama for its own sake, my chief interest lay in the fact that the poet Wordsworth was an eye-witness of the original performance, and perhaps

played a rôle himself. He was at Blois, as is well known, in the spring and summer of 1792. Leaving England on or shortly after the 23rd of November in the preceding year, he crossed to France, stayed a short time in Paris, lived, no one knows exactly how long, at Orleans, and then went thirty-six miles farther down the Loire to Blois. He was already imbued with the doctrines of Rousseau, and was inclined, for this reason and because of his experiences on a former visit to France, to sympathize with the Revolution. Either at Orleans or at Blois, he was disgusted, as he tells us in the "Prelude," with the pretensions of a group of royalists into whose company he fell, and at the latter place he formed an intimate attachment to a young republican officer of the 32nd regiment of the line, Captain Michel Beaupuy, a descendant of Montaigne. MM. Brussière and Legouis, in their monograph "*Le Général Michel Beaupuy*," have thrown much light on the history and character of this devoted revolutionist, whom Wordsworth in the "Prelude" ranks among the heroes of ancient Greece for patriotism and wisdom. They do not tell us, however, at what time and in what circumstances Wordsworth made his acquaintance. The old minute-book has helped me to penetrate the mystery, and I am certain that I have discovered where and when the poet and the soldier must have met.

It was with a thrill of excitement that I read, in the registers of the *Amis de la Constitution* the following minute:

"Session of February 3, year 4th of liberty.

"A member asked for a hearing and proposed two Englishmen for membership, requesting that, as foreigners and not naturalized, they should not be required to take the oath. The matter having been discussed, it was decided that they should not be received, but that nevertheless they might attend the sessions."

On the same day, "Our brothers of the 32nd regiment took the oath collectively, after the formula had been read."



I have little doubt that Wordsworth was one of the two Englishmen. Beaupuy was certainly one of "our brothers of the 32nd regiment." There are frequent references to this body in the minute-book, sometimes under its old royalist name, "Bassigny." Only a detachment was at Blois, including Beaupuy's company. The rest, and I believe the larger part, of the regiment was at Tours.

New members of the society did not always take the oath immediately after their election, and no doubt it was Beaupuy of whom it is recorded, on January 22, 1792, "One of our brothers of the 32nd regiment read a most eloquent discourse on political distrust. He made us feel how dangerous it is when it exceeds the limits of that proper watchfulness which is the duty of all good citizens." His paper was followed by a discussion of the danger and the necessity of enthusiasm. The officer's name is almost illegible, but seems to be "Beaupuy" or "Beaupuis," the latter being the spelling Wordsworth uses in the "Prelude." The sentiments of which we thus catch a far-away echo are precisely those which Beaupuy is known to have entertained. He was ardent in support of revolutionary principles and had made of them a religion; but his chivalrous nature scorned suspicion, and he foresaw that "political distrust" might degenerate into terrorism. On January 29th it is recorded that "M. (name not plainly legible, but very much like Beaupuy), officer of the 32nd regiment, gave a second reading of his discourse on distrust, which was received with fresh plaudits."

Beaupuy's company, according to MM. Bussière and Legouis, had been transferred from Tours to Blois in August, 1791. He was stationed there until July 27, 1792, when he parted from his young English friend, now a zealous convert to that religion of humanity which Beaupuy professed. He filled with deeds of honor the four years of life that remained to him, and died a hero's death, fighting on the northern frontier, October 19, 1796. In any attempt to establish the living

personal influences that determined Wordsworth's character, the name of Michel Beaupuy must come next after those of Dorothy Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

I have said that I have little doubt Wordsworth was one of the two Englishmen for whom application was made on February 3, 1792. In the minutes of the society no other Englishmen are mentioned or referred to. Wordsworth himself, in his curiously disproportioned Autobiographical Memoranda, tells us that he lived at Blois for some time in 1792 and was there "when the king was dethroned," which was in August. He wrote from Blois to his friend William Matthews, on May 17, expressing his interest in the fortunes of the Revolution and his anxiety lest its enemies might prevail against it. After beginning to write of French affairs, he checks himself. "The truth is," he says, "that in London you have perhaps a better opportunity of being informed of the general concerns of France than in a petty provincial town in the heart of the kingdom itself. The annals of the department are all with which I have a better opportunity of being acquainted than you, provided you feel sufficient interest in informing yourself." The terms in which he refers, in the "Prelude," to his association with Beaupuy, their walks and excursions together, their long discussions, and his own gradual change, under Beaupuy's influence, from a very friendly spectator of the Revolution to a grounded and well-informed defender of its principles, make it almost necessary to infer that he was at Blois the better half of a year. There could have been very few other Englishmen in the place, probably not more than one or two. Joseph Jekyll, a young English traveller who resided there in 1775, found only one compatriot. And there was now an element of danger, which would tend to keep foreigners away from the interior of France. At no time, moreover, was there much at Blois to attract strangers. The larger cities of Orleans above and Tours below both offered superior charms.

In addition to his friendship with Beaupuy, which was founded on sympathy with the Revolutionary cause and an intellectual affinity between the young men, Wordsworth enjoyed intimate relations with a French family of conservative, royalist views, named Vallon, residing in the neighborhood of Blois. He was thus in a position to hear both sides of the controversy, and we know from a passage in the ninth book of "The Prelude" that he sometimes allowed the traditions of ancient France to soften with romantic glamour the sternness of his republican principles:

Imagination, potent to inflame  
At times with virtuous wrath and noble scorn,  
Did often also mitigate the force  
Of civic prejudice, the bigotry,  
So call it, of a youthful patriot's mind.

At this period of his life, as is proved by his dissensions with his family and by his letters, the young poet was very outspoken. France was one vast debating society, and he was not the man to shrink from expressing his views. At the daily meetings of the Revolutionary club he could hear the fundamental principles of government discussed, could pick up the latest news, hot from the central hearth of Paris, and though not permitted to speak himself, could witness Beaupuy's oratorical triumphs. Apart from the sessions of the club and conversation with the friends already alluded to, he must have found the social resources of Blois extremely limited. The town, having lost its distinction as a royal residence and an ecclesiastical centre, was dull and colorless, except for the one hour of intense patriotic fervor and the one place where all vital interests converged. We must not forget, too, that Wordsworth's ostensible purpose in residing in France was to master the language. It is, for all these reasons, extremely likely that he frequented the meetings that were held every evening in the abbey of St. Laumer or the church of the Jacobins, to learn the news, hear the debates, train his ear, and fill with arguments his eager and growing mind.

The stage of this nightly drama would hardly be called brilliant in our time and certainly fell far short of the old ceremonious occasions of pre-revolutionary days in all the outward appurtenances of splendor. Grégoire, the republican bishop, who exercised the functions of his office in defiance of Rome, presided, but with little pomp as compared with the public appearances of former prelates. A few officers of the new army, Captain Michel Beaupuy and some of his mess-mates from the 32nd regiment, were in attendance, but their uniforms were plain and their manners unimposing. Through the dusk of those summer evenings, rendered darker by the candles on the platform which had replaced the altar, a flutter of white in the galleries showed that the new sisterhood of patriotic women were prepared to sing the new patriotic hymn. A sense of friendliness pervaded the throng, and of reliance upon common instincts and common sacrifices. A genuine simplicity prevailed. With the hopefulness and even gaiety that the Revolution at this time inspired, there was mingled a weight of solemn responsibility and a premonition of danger; for these days and nights, though throbbing with joyous enthusiasm, were rent with anxiety. The tramp of marching feet was often heard between the speeches and the songs, for as the poet tells us,

day by day, the roads  
Were crowded with the bravest youth of France,  
And all the promptest of her spirits, linked  
In gallant soldiership, and posting on  
To meet the war upon her frontier bounds.

It was a happy circumstance that a young Englishman gifted with imagination and the power of language, a poet fitted by birth and early life and education to sympathize with democratic aspirations, should have been a witness of these scenes. While many of his countrymen at home were being taught to regard the French Revolution with horror and dismay as the work of selfish agitators and crazy fanatics, and were delud-

ing themselves with the opinion that its only source was the Parisian mob, he was able to observe the movement in a small and fairly typical country town and to perceive that it flowered from the minds and hearts of the best people in France, of every rank and occupation. And thus he was fitted by his origin and by experience to produce, in the ninth, tenth and eleventh books of "The Prelude," the most original, sympathetic, and powerful interpretation of the Revolution which literature has yielded.



## WORDSWORTH'S LOVE POETRY

Romantic love and heroic adventure have ever been the main themes of poetry. "Arms and the woman I sing" might stand accurately enough on the title-page of almost every poet's works. Wordsworth is supposed to have added to his other titles to distinction the originality of doing very well without much aid from these usually rather overflowing sources of interest. The adventures he records are chiefly spiritual,—the struggle for liberty and equality, the war between faith and doubt,—while the romance that tinges his pages with morning gold and noonday green is the glamour of nature. It is commonly believed that he wrote very little about love, and that when he did so he displayed no depth of passion and but slight personal acquaintance with its effects. The quantity of his love poetry is indeed not large, but its quality and intensity and the depth of its significance for him, though perhaps not apparent, nor intended to be apparent, to casual readers, are discernible enough to a curious observer. Rare and delicate as are the emotions expressed, they disturb us with a sense of hidden raptures and pains, numerous, long-continued, and complex; we feel that the graceful forms which have been so carefully allowed to escape through the iron gates of this man's reserve may be very far from representing the whole family of his love-desires and love-sorrows. Considering that poetry is, above all things, self-expression, and that on other subjects, intimate and hazardous enough, Wordsworth opened his heart freely, it is strange that he was so guarded in this one particular; but the fact that he controlled his utterance is no reason for supposing that his experience of romantic love was either slight or commonplace. He spoke with uncouth frankness and perhaps with some exaggeration, but on the

whole truly no doubt, when he said: "Had I been a writer of love-poetry, it would have been natural to me to write it with a degree of warmth which would hardly have been approved by my principles, and which might have been undesirable for the reader."

Such scruples are very unusual, but they are thoroughly characteristic of Wordsworth, who was in the highest sense a "responsible" man. He felt under obligation to posterity, as a great poet,—and of course he was conscious of his genius, as all real poets have been—not to utter his message on the most interesting and one of the most important subjects with which art has to deal, until he was able to speak from the depths of ripened knowledge. He had regard for his fame and knew that his powers could be best employed along less beaten paths. There were in his past a sorrow which he wished to veil and a false step which he did not feel called upon to exhibit publicly, though from all who were really concerned he did not conceal it. On these principles he expunged, with inexorable self-restraint, from one of his earliest published poems, "Descriptive Sketches," several harmless-looking but glowing passages about the "fair, dark-eyed maids" to whose charms he was not blind when, as a mere stripling, he marched from the English Channel to the Italian Lakes.

Recent discoveries in regard to his early life have awakened a lively interest as to the real significance of some of his poems and brought into question the accepted dates of their composition. Have we any fresh light, for example, on the so-called "Lucy poems?" Could they have reference to the French lady whom the poet loved? The reply must be that since Annette, whom he wooed by the banks of the Loire, in 1792, was living in 1820, she was certainly not the subject of the five lovely unnamed lyrics known as the Lucy poems:—"Strange fits of passion have I known," "She dwelt among the untrodden ways," "I travelled among unknown men," "Three years she grew in sun and shower," and "A

slumber did my spirit seal." These are elegies. Unless they are purely ideal, what they record is love for a maiden snatched away from her lover by death; and besides we have the distinct statement

she I cherished turned her wheel  
Beside an English fire.

He tells us that these poems were written in 1799, during his travels in Germany with his sister. At this time, in the lonely days they passed at Goslar, too shy to mingle with the society of the place, Wordsworth lived in the past, calling to his mind his school-days and the friends of his boyhood, and composing much of his best and most characteristic poetry. The narrow-minded inhabitants of Goslar, with their coarse views of woman, ostracized his sister, because they deemed it improper for a young unmarried woman to be traveling abroad even with her brother, and indeed it seems from a letter of Coleridge's that they suspected William was not her brother. Coleridge wrote to his wife in January, 1799, from another North-German town: "I hear . . . often from Wordsworth. He seems to have employed more time in writing English than in studying German. No wonder! for he might as well have been in England as at Goslar, in the situation which he chose and with his unseeking manners. . . . His taking his sister with him was a wrong step; it is next but impossible for any but married women, or in the suit of married women, to be introduced to any company in Germany. Sister here is only a name for mistress. Still, however, male acquaintance he might have had, and had I been at Goslar I would have had them; but W., God love him! seems to have lost his spirits and almost his inclination for it."

Thrown back upon the resources of memory, Wordsworth either finished at this time poems actually begun in earlier days or composed the five elegies outright. Unless the

Maid whom there were none to praise  
And very few to love

was a pure creature of his imagination, she was an English child, whom he had loved and who now was "in her grave." There is not a single scrap of evidence, apart from the poems themselves and certain others, which, as I shall show, are closely allied to them, to prove when or where he might have known this girl. Coleridge, with whom he had been, as he said, "for more than two years, uninterruptedly, in as close intimacy as man could be with man," had evidently no private information on this subject, for he wrote from Germany to a friend, in April, 1799: "Some months ago Wordsworth transmitted me a most sublime epitaph. Whether it had any reality I cannot say. Most probably, in some gloomier moment, he had fancied the moment in which his sister would die:

### Epitaph

A slumber did my spirit seal,  
I had no human fears;  
She seemed a thing that could not feel  
The touch of earthly years.  
No motion has she now, no force,  
She neither hears nor sees:  
Moved round in Earth's diurnal course  
With rocks, and stones, and trees!

Coleridge's wild guess was eagerly taken up by Wordsworth's early biographers and critics, and even so keen a researcher as Mr. Thomas Hutchinson, editor of the Oxford "Wordsworth," put forth the view that "Lucy" and "Emma," because they contain only four letters, were used by the poet as equivalents of "Dora" and meant Dorothy, the poet's sister. But she was never known as Dora. There are two poems, "The Sparrow's Nest" and "To a Butterfly," in which "Emmeline" stands for Dorothy; but the poem "'Tis said that some have died for love," which contains the name "Emma," is, as it happens, a piece which may, in part at least, be a reminiscence of an early love and even a cryptic "Lucy poem." On the view that this is a composite work, the primitive part, stanzas

2, 3, 4, and 5, a lover's lament for the death of a maiden, is more personal and poignant than the context would lead one to expect.

A study of Wordsworth's peculiar and baffling practice of embedding early compositions in later work of a different character has led me to conjecture that the number of "Lucy poems" may be considerably augmented. Haunted by remorse for the sad error of his youth, and perhaps by dread of a public disclosure, he was almost morbidly careful to dissociate from himself all references to personal romantic love which he allowed to remain in his verse. Owing to his method of composing in his head, without the use of pen or pencil, some of his poems were in existence long before they were written out, and this fact, together with the inexactness of the explanatory notes which he dictated in extreme old age, and an anxious wish not to stir up the embers of dead fires, has made the chronology of many of his poems extremely uncertain. In "The Two April Mornings," for example, there is almost certainly a smaller complete poem, of independent origin, a love poem, the five stanzas that begin "Six feet in earth my Emma lay." It has precisely the same metrical structure as four of the five "Lucy poems." Its musical effect is similar to theirs. It appears to take up the story of the young man's grief where he left it in the "sublime epitaph."

But this process will carry us much farther. Mr. Eric Robertson, in his fascinating book, "Wordsworthshire," which is much more than a study of local color, being in fact a sympathetic and penetrating critical study of Wordsworth's creative processes, made the rather startling suggestion, some years ago, that if the first three and the last two stanzas of the ballad of "Lucy Gray" were lifted out of their present connection and brought together, we should have in them another complete love poem, in the same spirit and on the same subject as the famous five. Make the experiment,



and you will be convinced that this is so. It is not only a love poem but an elegy on a child, in the same musical tone as the others and expressing the same calm resignation to Nature's will.

Because of its melody and on all internal evidence, I should be inclined to place with the "Lucy group" the strange poem, so like them in its reticent expression of delicate but heart-possessing joys and fears, which begins, "Among all lovely things my Love had been," even though a letter from Wordsworth to Coleridge, quoted in Bishop Wordsworth's "Memoirs" of his uncle, and two passages in Dorothy's Journals, must be accepted as conclusive evidence that he composed it in April, 1802, at a time when the memory of his child-love might be thought to have faded and his approaching marriage with Mary Hutchinson to have filled all his mind. When, however, the Bishop states that Wordsworth wrote to Coleridge, "The incident of this poem took place about seven years ago between my sister and me," we may still question whether this is a correct account of the spiritual origin of the poem.

Two poems which Wordsworth, more than forty years after he composed them, dated incorrectly 1805, "To Louisa" and the lines beginning "Dear Child of Nature, let them rail!" are parts of one whole. If they be read immediately before the exquisite "Lucy poem," "Three years she grew in sun and shower," it will be seen that the three together make a beautiful and harmonious trilogy. One thing is certain: Wordsworth was mistaken in saying that the second member of this group was composed in 1805, for it has been found printed in a copy of *The Morning Post* newspaper of February 12, 1802. What was once the second stanza of "Louisa" was, singularly enough, omitted from all editions of the poet's works between 1807 and 1843. It is very fine and would not be out of place in "Three years she grew in sun and shower." The metre of these three poems, which I believe

are really one composition, was rarely used by Wordsworth. The discarded stanza is:

And she hath smiles to earth unknown;  
Smiles that with motion of their own  
Do spread, and sink, and rise;  
That come and go with endless play,  
And ever, as they pass away,  
Are hidden in her eyes.

That he was capable of mingling two distinct personal emotions in one poem may be seen in the case of "She was a Phantom of delight." He told his friends that this poem was written about his wife, and dated it 1804, though in 1843 he dictated a note to it in which he declared, "The germ of this poem was four lines composed as a part of the verses on "The Highland Girl." If the reader will turn to the passage in Dorothy's "Recollections of a tour made in Scotland" which bears the date August 28th, 1803, he will probably feel that the tribute to the girl of Inversnaid continues through the whole of the first ten lines or indeed the first twenty of "She was a Phantom of delight." Here again the metre has much significance, for although "She was a Phantom of delight" is divided into stanzas and the poem "To a Highland Girl" is not, the difference is merely specious, since both are in octosyllabic couplets. Of pieces undoubtedly written in praise of Mrs. Wordsworth there are not a few, including "Our walk was far among the ancient trees," "Let other bards of angels sing," two sonnets "To a Painter," and the noble and deeply thoughtful verses beginning "O dearer far than light and life are dear."

Nothing could be more shadowy or more exquisitely tender than the traces of young love in the "Lucy poems." It was broken by the hand of death alone, broken but not marred. Wordsworth's unhappy experience in France was of another kind and left a deep scar upon his heart and a source of misery in his life. It was of himself and Annette, I believe, that he

was thinking, and to some extent, though with many alterations of fact, it was their own story he was telling, when he wrote "Vaudracour and Julia." From a sort of conscientiousness which it is easy to understand, he inserted into "The Prelude" a passage on the same subject. He no doubt felt an uneasy desire both to confess his own fault and to record the extenuating circumstances.

It is now known that the deeply pathetic poem "The Affliction of Margaret———" and its pendent "The Forsaken," which were for many years supposed, on Wordsworth's testimony, to have been composed in 1804, were in existence at least as early as 1798. Their subject is the heart-ache and apprehension of one who has been deserted by the object of her love, and the same motive is heard in "Ruth" (which, by the way, is in the same stanza-form as "Three years she grew in sun and shower"), "The Thorn," "Her eyes are wild" (originally "The Mad Mother," in "Lyrical Ballads," 1798), and "Guilt and Sorrow" (one-third of which appeared in "Lyrical Ballads" as "The Female Vagrant"). The first book of "The Excursion" contains much matter that was originally composed in 1795; and here again the subject is desertion. It must not be inferred, from his dwelling on this sad theme, that Wordsworth had reason to reproach himself with disloyalty to Annette. He was in correspondence with her through all those anxious years and had made known to his sister the difficulty that darkened his life. But his imagination dwelt upon the subject of desertion and remorse, its most poignant expressions being the stanza in "The Affliction of Margaret———,"

My apprehensions come in crowds;  
I dread the rustling of the grass;  
The very shadows of the clouds  
Have power to shake me as they pass:  
I question things and do not find  
One that will answer to my mind;  
And all the world appears unkind.

(the spirit of which is caught and re-echoed by Tennyson in "Mariana in the Moated Grange"), and the stanza in "The Forsaken,"

The peace which others seek they find;  
The heaviest storms not longest last;  
Heaven grants even to the guiltiest mind  
An amnesty for what is past;  
When will my sentence be reversed?  
I only pray to know the worst;  
And wish as if my heart would burst.

After many years, in "Laodamia," the most mature of Wordsworth's poems and the one that he said had cost him more trouble than almost anything of equal length he had ever written,—pains richly rewarded with Elysian beauty and a depth of meaning that includes the wisdom of the ancients and the religion of later ages—he uttered his final message on the love between man and woman. Now after many years, "the past unsighed for and the future sure," he could look back with calm though pensive eye, disillusioned and unafraid, upon the most mysteriously potent of all human motives, and at last he might speak out. With oracular voice he proclaimed,

the Gods approve  
The depth, and not the tumult of the soul;  
A fervent, not ungovernable love.

And, not to end without a note of higher hope, he adds, in the words of Protesilaus returning to the blissful shades,

Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend—  
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,  
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;  
For this the passion to excess was driven—  
That self might be annulled: her bondage prove  
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love.

## DAVID BRAINERD, A PURITAN SAINT

By accident there came into my hands the other day a book in which the passions of hope and fear are painted in colors drawn from the rainbow of heaven and from the murk of hell. The heights of human ecstasy which it displays, and the depths of human despair, its revelation of what a man may endure, its portrayal of a frail mortal holding out against the powers of physical and mental evil, the vision it presents of what a man may be and of what one man really was, make it a picture in which we behold our nature in one of its highest, if not one of its most attractive expressions. The half-complacent feeling of pity with which I began to read this book changed anon to respect, to wonder, and to awe, and at the end I found myself troubled with a stir of almost forgotten desires and of purposes seldom entertained in the present age. Its author spent his life in heroic effort to make converts to his faith. He has been in his grave more than three half-centuries, and though I cannot pretend to accept his teaching in what he would no doubt regard as its essential elements, I could wish him to know that his thought and actions have moved at least one heart in our time, and that, in so far, his works do follow him.

One of the scenes of the tragic part he played is only a few miles from my home. From the towers of Princeton may be seen the white spire of a village where he toiled and suffered and triumphed in the very year and month in which the first charter of our college was granted by the Provincial Government of New Jersey. Local interest, however, is the least part of the value of the book. The man himself lived detached from things. His record of his travels and sojourns is merely the background of the story of his soul. This is



the theme and this the mystery. Yet though a religious person of the eighteenth century might have contented himself with the main subject, no curious reader in the twentieth can close his eyes to the historical significance and the minor suggestions of the *Diary of David Brainerd*.

One of the early editors of this work—for it was several times published, many years ago—says of its author: "His name is now extensively known throughout Christendom; and the time is near when it will be more generally known, over this world, than that of Alexander, Caesar, or Napoleon," a prophecy that has not been so amply fulfilled as to render a short sketch of Brainerd superfluous.

He was born in 1718, at Haddam, Connecticut. His father was a man of some official dignity, being a member of his Majesty's Council for the colony. His mother was descended on both sides from Puritan pastors. At the age of about nine he lost his father, and five years later his mother. He spent the rest of his boyhood among friends and relatives in the villages of Haddam, East Haddam, and Durham, close to the Connecticut river, working on a farm and studying under the care of his elder brother and the minister in Haddam. All this time he was seeking a better country, and the ordinary pleasures and ambitions of a well-bred, wholesome-minded youth appeared to him nothing but hindrances on his journey. In our age of superficial and mechanical activity even the most sensitive spirits can blunt themselves by constant use in seemingly important though really petty tasks, and thus escape the inward necessity of turning to perilous adventure. No such outlet was offered to Brainerd. He was obliged to make of his soul either a ploughshare or a sword. Had the land of Connecticut been newly cleared and settled, there might have been exciting enough work for the plough; but the early days of exploration were over; the southern part of the Connecticut valley was no longer a frontier region and was already settling into a smug and rather color-

less prosperity. The realm of art was undiscovered, and the realm of learning too, except in so far as it was associated with theology. Religion alone challenged the temper of a keen spirit. The religious life was to such a youth as Brainerd what the map of the Western Hemisphere had been to Frobisher, Drake, and Raleigh. The "plan of salvation" lay before him like a chart. He never questioned its correctness, though he often blenched with reluctance at the thought of following the difficult course it traced for him.

Whoever desires to know what some of our ancestors meant by "the plan of salvation" can nowhere find a simpler and more unflinching answer than Brainerd's. To be saved, a human being must be convinced of his own sinfulness; he must realize the infinite perfection of God; he must seek forgiveness, *not for his own advantage, but for the sake of God's glory*, and solely on the ground of Christ's meritorious death. The well-known instrument of torture framed of the question "Am I willing to be damned for the glory of God?" was but a rhetorical rearrangement of the assertion "I desire salvation, not for my own advantage, but for God's glory." Strange as it may seem, out of this conviction of sin, this sense of divine perfection, and this effort to desire to be saved for God's glory and through the merits of Christ, there grew up in certain hearts, not a doglike fear and merely self-interested respect for the Almighty, but a burning love. Out of strength came forth sweetness. The principles themselves were of metallic hardness, but rare flowers of hope and zeal and charity grew from this apparently impenetrable soil. To a superficial view, and perhaps to a view that is not superficial, this is surprising. What is there to warm the heart in this combination of doctrines? Much there is to excite apprehension; but love, one might ask, how can love find nutriment in the thought of infinitudes? If the reason for God's wrath be the incompatibility between divine perfection and human imperfection, if the infinite must reprobate the finite, then is not

the gulf too vast for love to wing its way across? Brainerd answers, Yes, if the love of Man is meant; but it is God's love that must bridge the infinite void. Dante gave the same response:

La bontà infinita ha sì gran braccia  
Che prende ciò che si rivolge a lei,

The Infinite Goodness in His wide embrace  
Receives whatever turns again to Him.

To Brainerd when he was wrestling with the problem of salvation, as to St. Paul in the doctrinal parts of his epistles and to Dante in the Purgatorio, the conception of Christ as an element of the divine character totally eclipsed the conception of Jesus as a fellow man. Indeed one may read many pages of Brainerd's Diary, pages full of agonizing desire for salvation, without coming upon a single definite trace of the life and teaching of Jesus, or even his name.

With one exception, which will be mentioned later, the only faults of which Brainerd could accuse himself in boyhood and youth were "the performance of religious duties" with *delight*, in the trust that he might thereby win God's approval, and the occasional indulgence of social instincts which attracted him "to the company and amusements of the young." In the first sentence of his Diary he says: "I do not remember anything of conviction of sin, worthy of remark, till I was, I believe, about seven or eight years of age." Then, becoming concerned for his soul and terrified by the thought of death, he sought relief and "carnal security" by indulging in secret prayer. "But, alas!" he laments, "all my good frames were but self-righteousness, not founded on a desire for the glory of God." His pastor, Mr. Fiske, with whom he lived when he was twenty, advised him wholly to abandon young company and associate himself with grave elderly people, "which counsel," he says, "I followed." The young company of Haddam, in 1738, one surmises, was not likely to be very corrupt or

very seductive; but the plan of salvation included no earthly pleasures. His sole ground for self-reproach at this time was that he "rested entirely" on his "duties." "My manner of life," he says, "was now wholly regular, and full of religion, such as it was; for I read my bible more than twice through in less than a year, spent much time every day in prayer and other secret duties, gave great attention to the word preached, and endeavoured to my utmost to retain it." The feeling of security soon vanished, and he plunged into the blackness of despair. "Sometime in the beginning of winter, 1738," he says: "it pleased God, one Sabbath morning, as I was walking out for prayer, to give me on a sudden such a sense of my *danger* and the wrath of God that I stood amazed, and my former good frames presently vanished. From the view which I had of my sin and vileness, I was much distressed all that day, fearing that the vengeance of God would soon overtake me. I was much dejected; kept much alone; and sometimes envied the birds and beasts their happiness, because they were not exposed to eternal misery, as I evidently saw that I was."

Baffled in his attempts to obtain God's favor, he cried out that the conditions were too hard. "The many disappointments, great distresses and perplexity which I experienced put me into a most *horrible frame* of *contesting* with the Almighty; with an inward vehemence and virulence finding fault with his ways of dealing with mankind. I found great fault with the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, and my wicked heart often wished for some other way of salvation than by Jesus Christ. Being like the troubled sea, my thoughts confused, I used to contrive to *escape* the wrath of God by some *other* means. I had strange projects, full of Atheism, contriving to disappoint God's designs and decrees concerning me, or to escape his *notice*, and hide myself from him. But when, upon reflection, I saw these projects were vain, and would not serve me, and that I could contrive nothing for

my own relief, this would throw my mind into the most horrid frame, to wish there was no God, or to wish there were some *other* God that could control him." With unfaltering logic, he analyzes his difficulty by saying, "I was not yet effectually and experimentally taught that there could be no way prescribed whereby a natural man could, of his own strength, obtain that which is supernatural, and which the highest angel cannot give." Who that believes there is an essential difference, an infinite abyss, between the natural world and a supernatural power, who that believes that these words "natural" and supernatural" correspond to realities, can gain-say his conclusion? Even so argued the Jansenists of Port-Royal, and Brainerd singularly resembles Pascal, not only in the purely intellectual process of his argument, which is deductive and almost mathematical, but even in the form of his emotional outbursts. It is perhaps worth remarking also that these two absolutists in religion, and with them St. Augustine, were young men when they were thus

"Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone."

In Brainerd's case, as in Pascal's and St. Paul's and that of many another stubborn deductive reasoner, the change of heart, or conversion, was as decisive and unmistakeable as a geometrician's arrival at his *Quod erat demonstrandum*. On a Sabbath evening, July 12, 1739, he was walking in a solitary place, in "a thick dark grove" (one thinks of Dante's *selva oscura*), when, he declares, unspeakable glory seemed to open to the view and apprehension of his soul: "I do not mean any *external* brightness, for I saw no such thing; nor do I intend any imagination of a body of light, somewhere in the third heavens, or anything of that nature; but it was a new inward apprehension or view that I had of *God*, such as I never had before, nor anything which had the least resemblance of it. . . . My soul *rejoiced with joy unspeakable* to see such a God, such a glorious divine being; and



I was inwardly pleased and satisfied that he should be *God over all* for ever and ever. My soul was so captivated and delighted with the excellency, loveliness, greatness, and other perfections of God that I was even swallowed up in him; at least to that degree that I had no thought (as I remember) *at first*, about my own salvation, and scarce reflected that there was such a creature as myself."

By many paths the children of men come to the knowledge and the love of God, but every path ends with this effacement of self, whether or not the world be blotted out by a blinding light and a vision of eternal glory. The simple-hearted soldier, giving back his life to his Maker, the bewildered sage, perceiving in a flash the littleness of his learning, the plain, unreasoning, yet somehow stubbornly faithful creature who lives in such and such a way because he believes it is God's way and for no other reason, these also are converts; they have turned from *their* way that they may live.

Can we not picture to ourselves the stage of this first act in Brainerd's life? He moved between three small, crude farming communities, in which there stood not a single creation of man's artistic or social instincts superior to the plain wooden meeting houses, and no prominent personality except the minister. There being few legitimate amusements, and even these looked upon with disfavor, it follows that young men who were not serious-minded must have had recourse to base and surreptitious pleasures, leaving finer spirits to the solitary pursuit of inactive virtue. If a man in such an environment desired really to live, he was obliged to dwell in a supersensual region, the splendor of whose intellectual light, if splendor indeed there were, might obliterate for him the flat physical landscape and the petty social world.

In September, 1739, Brainerd entered Yale College as a freshman, with some reluctance, fearing, he admits, lest he "should not be able to lead a life of strict religion in the midst of so many temptations." The freshmen lived much in

common and had little privacy. "Owing to hard study," he writes, "and to my being much exposed on account of my *freshmanship*, as I had but little time for spiritual duties, my soul often mourned for want of more time and opportunity to be alone with God. . . . My ambition in my studies greatly wronged the activity and vigor of my spiritual life." To be so scrupulous was perhaps an unhealthy symptom. There was danger also in his wondering how most of his fellow students could live as he "was sensible most did." A sounder proof that his conversion was genuine is found in the following exquisite passage: "One day I remember in particular, (I think it was in June, 1740) I walked to a considerable distance from the college, in the fields alone at noon, and in prayer found such unspeakable sweetness and delight in God that I thought, if I must continue still in this evil world, I wanted always to be there to behold God's glory; my soul dearly loved all mankind, and longed exceedingly that they should enjoy what I enjoyed. It seemed to be a little resemblance of heaven."

New Haven, like many other of the English communities in America, was at this time under the influence of a tremendous religious revival. The awakening was accompanied by strange psychical phenomena. The addresses and prayers of those who led this movement were, it would seem, in a more fervid style than that of the old settled pastors, and made a more direct appeal to the fear of hell fire. The converts, in many cases, professed to have seen visions and heard voices from another world, assuring them that they were justified in the sight of God. Not alone emotionally, but also doctrinally, the reform threatened to pass beyond the control of the established teachers of theology. Persons here and there, after a very real and undeniably effective religious experience, rediscovered for themselves doctrinal views which the Puritan churches had long since labelled as heresies. The germs of new sects were scattered broadcast. Yale College shared in

the general ferment, and Brainerd, as might have been expected, was among the students whose interest was most actively engaged. The authorities of the college, having provided what they considered sufficient religious exercises, forbade the young men to attend revival meetings in the town. Brainerd broke this rule, and one evening, after prayers in the college hall, he had the temerity to observe to a fellow student that Mr. Whittelsey, the tutor who had conducted the service, had no more grace, meaning of course religious grace, than the chair upon which the young rebel at that moment had laid his hand. This remark of an upper-classman being overheard by a passing freshman, and by him reported to a woman in the town, reached the rector's ears, and Brainerd, in consequence of these two pieces of dreadful misconduct, was expelled in the winter of 1742.

Jonathan Edwards, who edited the Diary, and published it in 1749, fearing lest its effect as a model of religious life might be impaired by the scandal of this event and by the implication that Brainerd was an immoderate zealot or partook of the imaginative excesses of the "awakening," was at considerable pains to state that "he was one of that sort of persons who usually are the furthest from a teeming imagination, being one of a penetrating genius, of clear thought, of close reasoning, and a very exact judgment, as all know that knew him." Edwards insists upon this point, that Brainerd's religious fervor was not communicated to him by an enthusiastic temperament or a "warm imagination." He was, indeed, less like St. Theresa or St. Catherine of Siena than like Edwards himself, possessing less of seraphic fire than of cherubic light, less of Francis than of Dominic. The Diary fully bears out Edwards's estimate of his young friend's natural disposition: it contains no record of what might be termed physical trance, no trace of visionary power, save the frequent emotional quickening of intellectual convictions based on theological dogma. Nor does it contain evidence of any love of

nature, any curious delight in human excellence, any play of fancy. Had Brainerd not been moulded and transformed by the potent hands of religious fear and hope, he would have been a hard-headed, self-centred, colorless, somewhat melancholy, and utterly commonplace New Englander, thinned and dried by the withering American air, an example of how speedily the old-world sap and flavor faded out of the transplanted stock.

After his expulsion he studied theology with several ministers in Litchfield and Fairfield counties, and was licensed to preach in July, 1742. The intervening months witnessed a return of his terrors. They were occasioned neither by any particular act or even thought of a sinful kind, nor indeed by the fading of that glory which dawned upon him at the moment of his conversion, but solely by letting his mind dwell upon the doctrine of election, and by the consciousness that he was still a sinful creature. Through he trusted that he had been saved by the grace of God, he realized that he was still capable of sin. If the infinite God had wholly pardoned and recreated an imperfect man, would not the process be complete and the result self-evident? But Calvinism did not teach that sanctification immediately followed the act of God's free grace whereby a sinner was accepted. How then was the still sinful, though contrite and hoping convert to know that he had been saved? This question tortured Brainerd, and it must perplex anyone to whom it occurs.

Notwithstanding this sense of his precarious condition and this feeling of unworthiness, he began to preach throughout the villages of western Connecticut. At Kent, one day, he was impressed with the spiritual needs of some Indians who lived in that neighborhood. There is an entry in his Diary for September 6, 1742, which Edwards does not explain, to the effect that he was threatened with imprisonment for preaching at New Haven. Nevertheless, he went secretly into the town, conversed with some friends there, "felt sweetly in

singing hymns with them," and made his escape to the farms again, without being discovered. A characteristic entry is that of November 4: "Saw much of my nothingness most of this day; but felt concerned that I had no more sense of my insufficiency and unworthiness. Oh, it is sweet lying in the dust! But it is distressing to feel in my soul that hell of corruption which still remains in me." Thus he analyses and condemns his life, day by day and hour by hour, blind to the world about him, but glaringly conscious of spiritual darkness and light.

Nothing could be more conducive to genuine optimism than witnessing such a conflict with powers that transcend matter and time, such a wrestling with the eternal; for the soul of man must be of incomparable worth, or at least must be something unique, to be thus brave, thus independent, thus assertive of its functions. And, as Henry James once said of Emerson, so we may assert of Brainerd, at this stage of his development: "We have the impression, somehow, that life had never bribed him to look at anything but the soul." Yet it is evident that something more than inward strife, even if crowned with victory, was needed. The concentration was unwholesome; the condensed energies would effect their own destruction unless they found an outlet in social activity.

The spell was lifted when, on November 19, 1742, Brainerd received a letter from the Rev. Ebenezer Pemberton, a Presbyterian minister in New York, inviting him to meet certain gentlemen of New Jersey and Pennsylvania who, together with himself, were the Correspondents of the Honorable Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. He complied, and was engaged by them as a missionary to the Indians. So whole-heartedly did he enter upon his undertaking that, as Jonathan Edwards says, "expecting in a little time to leave his native country to go among the savages into the wilderness, far distant, and spend the remainder of his life among them, and having some estate left him by his father," he undertook to devote this property to educating a



young man for the ministry, and continued so to use it during the rest of his own life. The Commissioners determined to send him among the Indians who lived near the confluence of the Delaware and the Lehigh rivers in Northampton County, Pennsylvania, and among others who dwelt farther west, near the forks of the Susquehanna. But they considerably recommended him not to enter upon his work until the severity of winter should be past, and he spent the season as an itinerant preacher and student in Connecticut and Long Island. In March, 1743, he visited the Correspondents, remaining for some time with the Rev. Jonathan Dickinson, at Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, and enjoying "some sweetness in conversation" with the Rev. Aaron Burr, at Newark. These gentlemen were subsequently presidents of the College of New Jersey, and they and Pemberton were among its first trustees. By reason of there being "some contention subsisting between the white people and the Indians concerning their lands," the Correspondents directed Brainerd to go for the present to the Indians at Kaunameek, between Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and Albany. For thirteen months he labored in that desolate place, at first sleeping in a wigwam on a little heap of straw, and later in the cabin of a Scotch Highlander, and finding in neither of these abodes a person, except the Scotchman himself, with whom he could speak English or engage in that sweet spiritual converse which was more precious to hear than any other language. In July he built himself a little house among his Indians. He appears to have valued it chiefly because it gave him a place of retirement where he might pray without distraction. The monastic instinct, a desire to be alone in a place sacred to communion with God, shows itself ever and anon in the record of his life.

In June, 1743, he had gone to New Haven and tried in vain to effect a reconciliation with the college authorities. There is a pathetic entry in his Diary for Wednesday, September 14, which must give a twinge of regret to every

graduate of Yale, and, for that matter, to every person who has enjoyed academic privileges: "This day I ought to have taken my *degree* [this being commencement day]; but God sees fit to deny it to me." He had returned to New Haven for this occasion, though he says, "I was greatly afraid of being overwhelmed with perplexity and confusion when I should see my classmates take theirs." Next day he presented in writing to the rector and trustees of the college a humble apology for having spoken ill of Mr. Whittelsey's grace in prayer and for his other offence in going to a separate meeting without permission. "The governors of the college," comments Edwards, "were so far satisfied that they appeared willing to admit Mr. B. again into college, but not to give him his degree till he should have remained there at least a twelvemonth; which being contrary to what the Correspondents, to whom he was now engaged, had declared to be their mind, he did not consent to it."

During the following winter he dwelt in his own hut at Kaunameek, riding frequently to and from Stockbridge, twenty miles through the wilderness, for lessons in the Indian language from a Mr. Sergeant who lived there. "Monday, Dec. 26. Rode down to Stockbridge, was very much fatigued with my journey, wherein I underwent great hardship: was much exposed and very wet by falling into a river. Spent the day and evening without much sense of divine and heavenly things; but felt guilty, grieved and perplexed with wandering, careless thoughts." On another occasion he was nearly frozen in the woods. He was able to rejoice, on January first, because he had been enabled, in the past fifteen months, to "bestow to charitable uses about a hundred pounds New England money." Days, or rather hours, of "freedom and refreshment" were vouchsafed him now and again. What these words of the Puritan vocabulary meant is unfolded in the entry for January 23: "I think I never felt more resigned to God, nor so much dead to the world, in every respect,

as now." It is amazing how many long journeys on horseback he undertook and how many miles he often covered in a day's ride. He travelled to New Jersey again in April, to confer with the Correspondents, returned once more to Kaunamook, and finally, having disposed of his clothes, books, etc., set out for the Delaware river, on May 1, 1744, riding in the rain through what he calls "the howling wilderness," though suffering from a dangerous illness. His journey lay through Stockbridge, Sheffield, Salisbury and Sharon, to Fishkill, and thence, on the other side of the Hudson, to Goshen, and so, as Edwards puts it, "across the woods, from Hudson's river to Delaware, about a hundred miles through a desolate and hideous country, above New Jersey, where are very few settlements."

He arrived, on May 12, at a settlement of "Irish" and "Dutch" people, about twelve miles above the confluence of the Lehigh and the Delaware. These pioneers, as we now know, and as Brainerd presently learned, were in fact neither Irish nor Dutch, but Ulster Scots and Germans, belonging to the two great bodies of immigrants who, with a much smaller number of British Quakers, made up the three main elements of Pennsylvania's white population. There were almost no Dutch in Pennsylvania, and hardly any real Irish until long after the Revolution, the people who were known as "Irish" in colonial times, and indeed in our national history for sixty years after the Revolution, being almost all Ulster Scots, and therefore Irish only by birth and not by race. These settlers, whom Brainerd found dwelling in peace not far from an Indian village, were as religious, in their several ways, as the New Englanders among whom he had been bred; but being late comers in this new world and having taken up land on the frontier, they had less leisure for speculative thought. For them, moreover, the Indian question was by no means a simple one. They had hitherto been able to participate in the advantages gained by the honest and conciliatory policy of

the Quakers, but knew not at what moment their homes might be endangered by Indian warfare. Their attitude, therefore—and especially that of the Ulster Scots, who in general formed the outer fringe of civilization, on the extreme western border, in that long Kittatinny valley which curves southwestward from the Catskills through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, was alert and suspicious. They were not conscientiously opposed to self-defence, and realized that in case of an Indian outbreak they would have to look out for themselves, since they could not depend on military assistance from the Quaker government at Philadelphia. Even beyond the great valley, through the mountain gaps, and along the upper tributaries of the Susquehanna and Potomac, a less worthy class of white men had penetrated the Indian hunting-grounds, carrying on a nefarious trade in fire-arms, powder, lead, and rum; and the evil deeds of these unscrupulous adventurers or the political machinations of the French might at any moment set the whole frontier ablaze. Some of the German settlers, particularly the Moravians, were as much concerned for the souls of the Indians as the New England missionary himself. Unfortunately he tells us little about the white people whom he met on his travels, though what he does relate is of extreme interest. The Dutch with whom he had come in contact in the Hudson river valley filled him with horror, being, as he considered, very irreligious. After one encounter with them he wrote in his Diary: "All their discourse turned upon the things of the world, which was no small exercise to my mind. Oh, what a hell it would be to spend an eternity with such men! Well might David say, 'I beheld the transgressors and was grieved.'" And after a visit to Kinderhook he wrote: "I had rather ride hard and fatigue myself to get home than to spend an evening and night amongst those who have no regard for God."

Day, in his "Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania," 1843, mentions Craig's settlement in Allen township,

Northampton county, and Hunter's settlement at Mount Bethel, as having been made by Ulster Presbyterians perhaps as early as 1730. It was near the latter place that Brainerd halted now and subsequently built himself a cabin. Discouragement both physical and moral met him on his arrival. He was ill, wet, and fatigued. "Was very melancholy; have scarce ever seen such a gloomy morning in my life; there appeared to be no Sabbath; the children were all at play; I a stranger in the wilderness, and knew not where to go; and all circumstances seemed to conspire to render my affairs dark and discouraging. Was disappointed concerning an interpreter, and heard that the Indians were much scattered, etc. Oh! I mourned after the presence of God, and seemed like a creature banished from his sight; yet he was pleased to support my sinking soul, amidst all my sorrows; so that I never entertained any thought of quitting my business among the poor Indians; but was comforted to think that death would ere long set me free from these distresses.—Rode about three or four miles to the Irish people, where I found some that appeared sober, and concerned about religion. My heart then began to be a little encouraged; went and preached, first to the Irish, and then to the Indians; and in the evening was a little comforted; my soul seemed to rest on God, and take courage. Oh that the Lord would be my support and comforter in an evil world!"

There was already "a place of public worship" at Mount Bethel, but the mountains he describes as "a hideous and howling wilderness." Surely it was an unpleasant "frame" of mind, or at any rate a foolish fashion, that led a traveller to apply such a term to what is even now a very beautiful region, though an age of steam and iron has done its worst to make it both hideous and howling. This attitude towards what to the Indians was home and place of business, playground and tabernacle, augured ill for the success of Brainerd's enterprise. One would like very much



to know how those wide valleys and winding streams looked in their unsullied freshness, but Brainerd gives no help. Were the vales wooded from side to side, or were there natural meadows? Were there many deer and other wild animals? Was earth "strangled with her waste fertility?" Was "the winged air dark with plumes?" What manner of life did these Scotch and German settlers lead? To what tribe did those Indians belong? For answers to these questions we must look elsewhere than to Brainerd. Earth was to him a hermitage, in which he dwelt with God, sighing for death. His kind of religion obliged him to regard the Indians as brands to be snatched if possible from hell-fire. Their natural ignorance he regarded as inherited depravity, and even those naïve and interesting movements of theirs to worship some divine power and obey the voice of conscience aroused in him no hearty approval. Idolatry and self-assurance! Leaning on broken reeds! Will-worship! His attitude towards all their institutions was unsympathetic, and the fault lay in his creed. Were not the imperfections of the Indians a sure proof of Adam's fall and the corruption of human nature?

The poor savages might have been expected to flee from such a prophet, or to have tomahawked and scalped him. But their admiration of courage and prowess must have been stirred by the sight of the worn body riding so bravely into the woodland fastnesses; and into whatsoever form the interpreters may have transmuted the Calvinistic matter of his sermons, his auditors must have been touched by his earnest voice, his yearning countenance. He came among them with nothing to sell, with no credentials from grasping proprietors, and no weapons. When he reproved them for drunkenness and other vices, their consciences met his appeal halfway. And it is by no means certain that their minds were inaccessible to his purely theological teaching. Again and again he tells of old people especially who came to him with tears in their eyes, asking how they might be saved. He seems never

to have diluted the strong medicine of the "word" so as to make it acceptable to their undeveloped taste. They must pass through the same "experience" that he and the reverend gentlemen in Connecticut had undergone,—conviction of sin, contrition, prayer for mercy, in the name of Christ, and then an awful waiting for the grace of God and an unremitting effort to make their calling and election sure.

In one of his reports to the Honorable Society in Scotland, we find an extremely interesting account of such religious ideas as he had found among the Indians. They have one God for themselves, and think that the white man's God is a different being and not so skilful in his work. They have "some confused notion about a future state of existence," and certain of them have "some faint and glimmering notions about rewards and punishments, or at least happiness and misery, in a future state." The point in which they differ from Brainerd is that "these rewards and punishments they suppose to depend entirely upon their conduct with relation to duties of the second table, viz: their behavior towards mankind." They offer sacrifices, it is true, but "they do not suppose God will ever punish them in the coming world for neglecting to sacrifice." This to Brainerd appeared a sad heresy; he would have had them know a jealous God such as the Israelites figured theirs to be. It is impossible to justify him for calling the Indians idolaters, and not surprising that few of them accepted his offer of an angry and jealous God and the choice between hell and an uncertain salvation. What might have been the result if he had taken a more sympathetic view of their religious "notions," and added thereto only the element of love, both divine and human, as taught by Jesus and practiced by the best of Christians? No one can tell, but we know that by teaching the doctrines of wrath and fear which appealed so strongly to many of the greatest logicians of the white race he failed to convert more than a very few red men.

Remaining only two weeks above the forks of the Delaware,

Brainerd, in obedience to his instructions, returned to Newark, where, on the 12th of June, 1744, he was ordained. For nearly a year longer he then continued to reside at the forks of the Delaware, preaching to the Indians and Scotch Presbyterians there. In spite of bodily weakness and spiritual melancholy, he took seven long journeys on horseback during this year. In September, 1744, he spent three weeks visiting his friends in New England. In October, accompanied by a minister from New Jersey named Byram, two Indian chiefs, and an interpreter, he made his way through the pathless wilderness to a place he calls Opeholhaupung, on the Susquehanna. It gives one some idea of the small number of the Indians to learn that this village, which was one of their most considerable, consisted of only a dozen huts. At the forks of the Delaware they had only ten huts, and these were scattered over a wide space. It is preposterous to affirm, as some writers have done, that a few thousand savages, of migratory habits, ought to have been treated as the real proprietors of the vast territories over which they roamed, and that all white settlers, save the followers of William Penn, were little better than robbers.

Remaining with the Susquehanna tribe only a few days, Brainerd returned to the Delaware more dead than alive, but recovered in time to ride to Newark and New York in November, to attend a meeting of presbytery. One Lord's day in February, he tells us, his interpreter being absent, he preached to the white people in the wilderness, upon the sunny side of a hill, some of them having come nearly twenty miles. "I discoursed to them all day," he admits. He spent a large part of March and April in New England, New York, and New Jersey, trying to collect money to pay the salary of a colleague, having a desire to go himself to the Susquehanna tribes. He prosecuted this design with restless energy, riding, immediately after his return, to see the Governor at Philadelphia and persuade him to ask the chiefs of the Six Nations to

give him permission to live among their vassels. On his way back from Philadelphia he found much enjoyment in the society of two remarkable men, the Rev. Mr. Treat, of Abington, and the Rev. Mr. Beatty, of Neshaminy, the latter of whom was himself to make a long missionary journey, in 1766, among the Ulster Scots and Indians in southwestern Pennsylvania.

On May 8, 1745, Brainerd set out once more for the Susquehanna. Apparently he struck the North Branch at some point below where Wilkes-Barre now stands, and followed the stream to Harris's Ferry, now Harrisburg, for Edwards, condensing this part of the Diary, the very part that would most have interested a modern reader, says "he travelled about the length of a hundred miles on the river, and visited many towns and settlements of the Indians, saw some of seven or eight distinct tribes, and preached to different nations, by different interpreters." He even encountered some of his old Kaunameek hearers. Mention is made of only one place, Juniata Island, which can be certainly identified as having been visited by Brainerd on this journey. He often slept in the open air, lying on the ground or on heaps of boughs, and returned home on May 30, burning with fever and wasted with dysentery, having ridden three hundred and forty miles.

Early in June, 1745, he again left his home, and after visiting fellow ministers, at Neshaminy, Maidenhead, and other places, whom he terms "the excellent ones of the earth, in whom is all my delight," he came to a small scattered Indian village named Crossweeksung, a few miles east of Bordentown, New Jersey. He found congenial spirits in the Rev. William Tennent, at Freehold, and the Rev. Mr. McKnight, at Cranbury. That summer he spent partly at Crossweeksung, partly at the forks of the Delaware, and in September he visited the Susquehanna Indians for a third time. The manuscript of his Diary, according to Edwards, was illegible in many of the pages describing this journey, "by reason of the badness of

the ink. It was probably written with the juice of some berries found in the woods." In his official report to the Scottish Society, however, Brainerd gives some interesting facts about the Indian town of Shaumoking, which lay partly on the east side of the river, partly on the west, and partly on a large island, and contained upward of fifty houses, the inhabitants being of three tribes, Delawares, Senecas, and Tutelas, "speaking three different languages, wholly unintelligible to each other." He found the Indians engaged in "a heathenish dance and revel," and observed "they are counted the most drunken, mischievous, and ruffianly fellows of any in these parts; and Satan seems to have his seat in this town in an eminent manner." He adds to the common testimony of travellers to the effect that the principal cause of violence among the Indians was alcoholic drink, which they obtained from white traders.

At Juniata Island he stumbled upon another pagan ceremony: "In the evening they met together, near a hundred of them, and danced round a large fire, having prepared ten fat deer for the sacrifice; the fat of whose inwards they burnt in the fire while they were dancing, and sometimes raised the flame to a prodigious height; at the same time yelling and shouting in such a manner that they might easily have been heard two miles or more. They continued their sacred dance all night, or near the matter; after which they ate the flesh of the sacrifice, and so retired each one to his lodging." It is not surprising that the delicate young scholar, the only Christian on the island, "enjoyed little satisfaction this night," walking to and fro, until, weary in mind and body, he crept into a little corn-crib and there fell asleep on the poles. Next day half a dozen medicine men or powpows went through a performance to ascertain the reason for a fever and bloody flux with which the people were afflicted. Their monstrous actions, says Brainerd, seemed peculiarly suited to raise the devil, if he could be raised by anything odd, ridiculous, and frightful. Having courage enough to face the evils of both



worlds, and being an ever-watchful adversary of Satan, he sat at a small distance with his Bible in his hand, "resolving, if possible, to spoil their sport and prevent their receiving any answer from the infernal world, and there viewed the whole scene."

The Indians on Juniata Island, he says, had formerly lived in Maryland in contact with white people, and were very vicious, drunken, and profane. In his report to the Scottish Society, entitled "*Mirabilia Dei inter Indicos*," and known as his Journal, Brainerd writes at so much length and in so free a style upon the scenes he witnessed beside the Susquehanna, that one cannot help wondering whether Jonathan Edwards, following a preference for passages tending to religious edification, may not have omitted from his edition of the Diary, many mundane observations that would now possess great historical interest. At all event, no passage in the Diary is so full and elaborate as a passage in the Journal, in which an Indian reformer is described.

It would be difficult to imagine a more suggestive scene than the meeting of these two spiritual experts, the pale young Christian, bent beneath a load of theological baggage, but uplifted with pure love for God as the Best, and animated still by that desire for God's glory which was his criterion of spiritual blessedness; him on the one hand; and on the other the Indian "in his pontifical garb" of bearskin, his ridiculous rattle of tortoise-shell on the end of a stick, and in his heart a fervent desire to restore the ancient religion of his people,—a man whom God had comforted in trial and instructed in perplexity, who had, like John the Baptist, gone alone into the wilderness to pray and returned with a message of repentance. Outwardly the man was repulsive, so that even the intrepid Brainerd "could not but shrink away from him, although it was then noon-day." "He had a house consecrated to religious uses, with divers images cut upon the several parts of it." The undaunted white teacher, fascinated by his

rival, confronted him foot to foot, going into the mystic lodge, where he "found the ground beat almost as hard as a rock with their frequent dancing on it." The Indian treated his guest "with uncommon courtesy, and seemed to be hearty in it." Brainerd was not given to exaggeration, and no romantic motive could have caused him to decorate an Indian's ideas on religion with a single false stroke with the intention of imparting glamour. He would be inclined, on the contrary, to bring them into a strict comparison with his own and to judge them with unrelenting severity. Yet, according to his account, this Indian reformer must have been not only an original religious thinker, but a good man. "It was manifest," says Brainerd, and with intent to blame rather than to praise, "it was manifest he had a set of religious notions that he had looked into for himself, and not taken for granted upon bare tradition; and he relished or disrelished whatever was spoken of a religious nature, according as it either agreed or disagreed with his standard. And while I was discoursing he would sometimes say 'Now that I like; so God has taught me,' etc. And some of his sentiments seemed very just. Yet he utterly denied the being of a devil, and declared there was no such creature known among the Indians of old times, whose religion he supposed he was attempting to revive." Brainerd thought him sincere and conscientious and perceived that he "was looked upon and derided among most of the Indians as a precise zealot, that made a needless noise about religious matters," a fate which shows that he had much in common with other reformers. What stamps him most unmistakeably, however, as an honest man who really cared for the welfare of his people, is that the Indians reported that he opposed with all his power their habit of drinking strong liquor, "and if at any time he could not dissuade them from it, by all he could say, he would leave them and go crying into the woods."

Returning from this third trip to the Susquehanna, about

the end of September, 1745, Brainerd spent a few days among his people at the forks of the Delaware, and then rode to Crossweeksung, where, after much travelling in New Jersey and Long Island, on church affairs and for the purpose of collecting money for the support of a schoolmaster among the Indians, he built himself a house, and on December 9, wrote in his Diary: "Spent most of the day in procuring provisions, in order to my setting up house-keeping among the Indians. Enjoyed little satisfaction through the day, being very much out of my element."

When one pictures to one's self the scene of his labors and the ordinary life of his pupils, one realizes, in part at least, what a heroic task he had undertaken and also how unfortunate were some of his methods. Scattered through the pine woods that cover the sandy plain, are a few huts of bark and a few wigwams made of deerskin stretched on poles. Doubtless they are filthy and full of smoke. The squaws, old before their time, have husked the corn and dug the potatoes and are now busy gathering firewood. The children, dirty and noisy, swarm about the doors in idleness. When the men are not off hunting or begging from the whites, they lounge about in lordly leisure. Such at least must have been the general picture before Brainerd had reformed the life at Crossweeksung. What he wrote on December 21, partly in his Journal for the Scottish Society and partly in his private Diary, shows that he had accomplished much by that time: "My people having now attained to a considerable degree of knowledge in the principles of Christianity, I thought it proper to set up a catechetical lecture among them; and this evening attempted something in that form; proposing questions to them agreeable to the Reverend Assembly's Shorter Catechism." There is much more in regard to this, the day's public toil, in the Journal; and then, turning to the Diary, we find him at home: "After my labors with the Indians, spent some time in writing some things divine and solemn; and was much wearied with

the labors of the day; found that my spirits were extremely spent, and that I could do no more. I am conscious to myself that my labors are as great and constant as my nature will bear, and that ordinarily I go to the extent of my strength; so that I do all that I can; but the misery is I do not labor with that heavenly temper, that single eye to the glory of God, that I long for."

In the spring of 1746, the Indians removed from Cross-keeksung to Cranbury, a few miles southeast of Princeton, and he went with them. His zeal for their salvation and for the advancement of Christianity among Indians more remote consumed him day and night. He wrestled for them in prayer until he was afraid of disturbing the family with whom he lived, and "Oh," he says, "with what reluctance did I find myself obliged to consume time in sleep!"

On August 12, 1746, he set out on his fourth journey to the Susquehanna country, taking six of his Christian Indians with him. He traveled by way of Philadelphia, and came to the river near Paxton or Paxtang, meeting in that region with none that he thought "godly" people. On the 20th he reached the house of Mr. Chambers, at Harris's Ferry, now Harrisburg, and "was much afflicted, in the evening, with an ungodly crew, drinking, swearing, etc. Oh, what a hell it would be to be numbered with the ungodly!" Doubtless many of the travellers who were gathered at this gateway to the west, north, and southwest, would be rough customers. Adding to the limitations of frontiersmen the vices of loose-footed traders; and there is another excuse for Brainerd's unhappy mood, upon which it is necessary now to touch. He was dying of consumption. Cold sweats and haemorrhages begin to be mentioned in his Diary at this time, and having ridden for two days up the river till he passed above the English settlements, he suffered much in the Indian houses from smoke and in the open air from damp and cold. After spending a few days among the Delawares near the confluence

of the North and West Branches of the Susquehanna, he rode along the latter stream to a point near the site of Williamsport. He was too weak for this contest with nature, and had to retrace his weary course homewards, in September, returning by way of Philadelphia, Abington, where he lodged with Mr. Treat, and Princeton, where he was "kindly received and entertained" by Mr. Stockton. At nightfall, on September 20, he rode into Cranbury, where he had the gratification of finding his faithful people praying together. They welcomed him with tears, and must have been heart-stricken to behold him so wasted that he was obliged to lie upon his bed while instructing them. They were a gentle, docile flock, and had risen many degrees in the scale of civilization through his devoted care. He had secured to them the land on which they lived, when it was about to be taken from them as payment of debts incurred for intoxicating drink in the days before his coming. He had built them a schoolhouse and provided a schoolmaster and books. He had induced them to enter seriously upon the business of agriculture. He had taught some of them English, so that they spoke it among themselves. He had cured them of their vices, particularly drunkenness and the practice of easy divorce. Above all, he had been the instrument of awakening their religious instincts and directing their hearts to God.

The story of the last year of his life may be quickly told. He made a gallant struggle to continue his work, but the terrible progress of his malady was revealed to him and to his friends during a visit he made to Princeton and Kingston, and on November 3 he bade farewell to his people and set out for New England, to seek refreshment or to die amid the scenes of his youth. Being unable to proceed farther than Elizabeth, he remained there, hovering between life and death, until spring. The extent to which his temper, not naturally meek, had been brought into subjection is shown in the two following passages from his Diary: "On Lord's Day, Feb. 1,



though in a very weak and low state, I enjoyed a considerable deal of comfort and sweetness in divine things and was enabled to plead and use arguments with God in prayer, I think, with a childlike spirit." On March 4 he writes that he had met with a reproof from a friend, which, though he thought it undeserved, yet was, he trusted, blessed of God to make him "more tenderly afraid of sin . . . and more concerned to keep both heart and life pure and unblameable." From the context it appears that the fault for which he was rebuked was that in his "necessary diversions" he had not "maintained more seriousness, heavenly affection and conversation." What these necessary diversions were we cannot even conjecture, though we are able from this remark to catch a glimpse of that very unpleasant feature of Puritanism which consisted in an undue sense of responsibility for the behavior of one's fellowmen.

Cranbury being within a day's ride of Elizabeth, Brainerd's affection for his Indians drew him back for one last day with them about the middle of March; and on April 7 he was able to officiate at the marriage of his friend the Rev. Jonathan Dickinson, at Newark. Two weeks later he was sufficiently recovered to resume his journey into New England. He reached Northampton, Massachusetts, at the end of May, and with the exception of a visit to Boston to confer with persons there who were interested in missions among the Indians, he remained with Jonathan Edwards until his death, on October 9, 1747.\* His host, pausing in those abstruse studies which were to give him the highest rank as a philosophic thinker in our colonial world, and placing, as he always did, the duties of active charity above mere intellectual delights and labors,

\* A few material traces of Brainerd's wanderings still exist: a village in New York state, between Albany and Pittsfield, and one on the Delaware river a short distance north of Phillipsburg, New Jersey, bear his name; so does Brainerd Lake at Cranbury; and Morven, the house where he was kindly entertained at Princeton, is still owned and occupied by members of the Stockton family.

received Brainerd into his home as a son, or rather as a heavenly visitant. The great theologian has recorded with reverence the dying aspirations of his guest. These aspirations were no longer directed solely or chiefly by a desire for his own salvation; there is now a measure of peace and assurance on that subject; but his mind was filled with plans for Christianizing the Indians; he wondered "that there appeared no more of a disposition in ministers and people to pray for the flourishing of religion throughout the world;" almost with his last breath he dictated letters on the subject of missions.

One most pathetic circumstance remains to be touched upon, before we have done with this young man's history, so full of pain and hardship and solitude, and of grace and joy and heavenly glory. He was attended, through the last five months of his life, as he lay dying in Jonathan Edwards's house, by the latter's daughter Jerusha, of whom her father wrote, in a footnote in his edition of Brainerd's Diary: "Since this, it has pleased a holy and sovereign God to take away this my dear child by death, on the 14th of February next following; after a short illness of five days; in the eighteenth year of her age. She was a person of much the same spirit with Mr. Brainerd. She had constantly taken care of and attended him in his sickness, for nineteen weeks before his death; devoting herself to it with great delight, because she looked upon him as an eminent servant of Jesus Christ."

The annals of our Colonial history, full of brave and spirited adventure as they are, present no figure more heroic than David Brainerd. Few early documents are more precious to the chroniclers of Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania than his Diary and Journal, for notwithstanding his invariably consigning secular affairs to a secondary place, his scanty remarks on what he saw have great value, since his accuracy is as incontestable as his honesty, and it was with good reason that Jonathan Edwards praised the analytical quality of his

mind. I can think of no other American who so thoroughly exemplifies the spirit of Puritanism, as it was admirably described by Dr. John De Witt, in his Address at the Two-hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of Jonathan Edwards: "The unshaken belief in the reality of the spiritual universe, the ability to recognize its elements without the aid of material symbols, the strong impulse to find motives to action in the unseen and eternal, to feed the intellect and the heart on spiritual objects, and in distinctively spiritual experiences or exercises to discern the highest joys and the deepest sorrows and the great crises of life—these were the traits of the Puritans."

But, more than this, Brainerd's holy deeds must ever stand among humanity's *Acta Sanctorum*. He was a great saint, and even, in many curious respects, a typical one, with his austerity towards himself, his search after solitary communion with God, his voluntary poverty, his willingness to bow his high heart to authority. His writings constitute one of the most complete records of inner religious experience of which we have any knowledge, and are comparable, for poignancy and candor, to the Confessions of Augustine. The crumbling of centuries has had little effect upon the essential character of mystical religion. Whether in the utterances of the great African theologian or the eloquent deeds of Catherine of Siena or the faintly traced lines of David Brainerd, its language is the same, its limitations are unchanged, its object is one.















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